

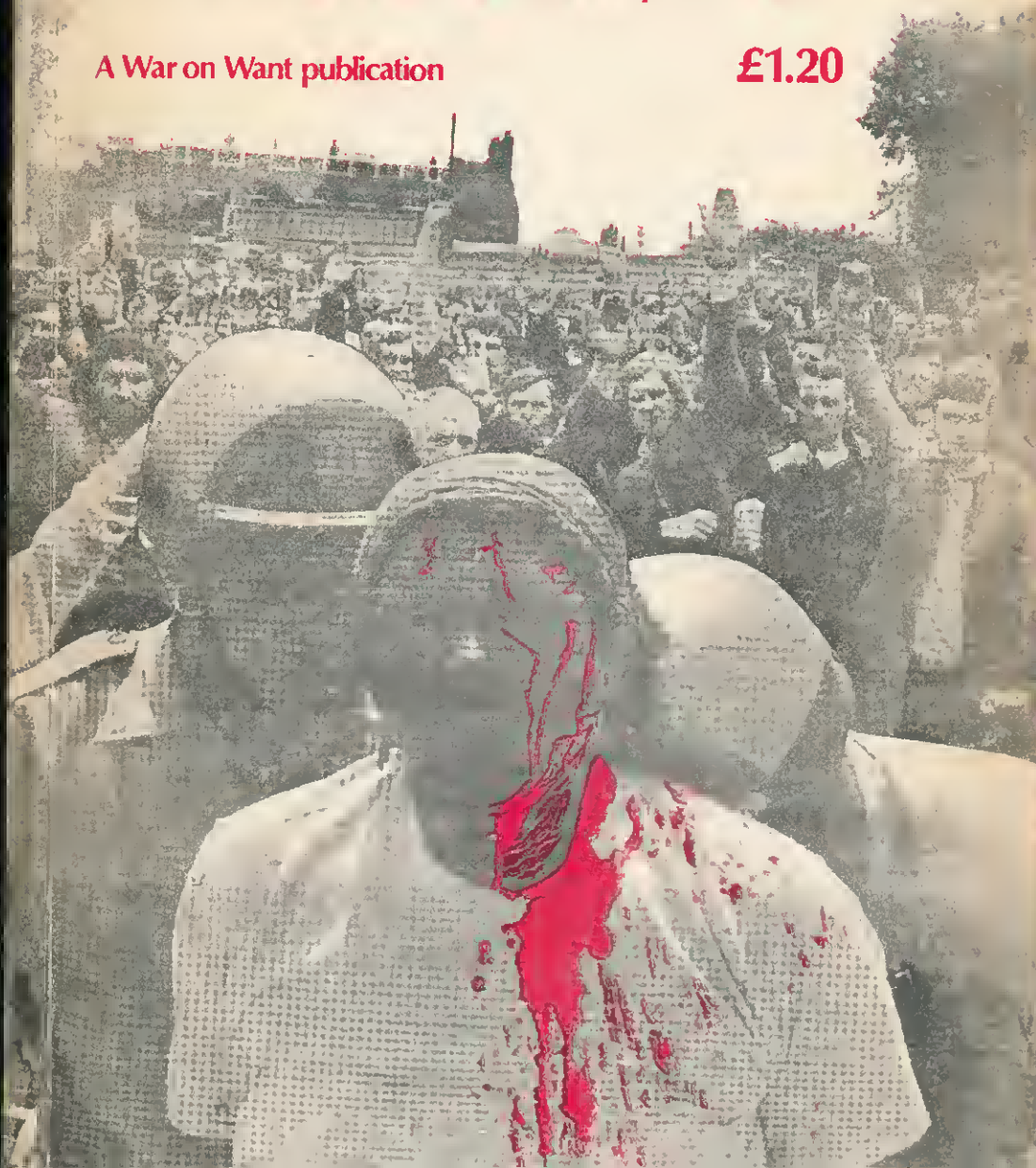
# Where were you, brother?

An account of Trade Union imperialism

by Don Thomson and Rodney Larson

A War on Want publication

£1.20



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Front Cover shows a member of the United Farm Workers Union, in the US (*TUC Library Photo*) superimposed on a picture of London dockers meeting (*Camera Press photo*).

## About War on Want

War on Want is a campaign against world poverty and for social justice. It works with groups of the organised poor in the Third World.

Its prime role is to discover — and help others to discover — some of the factors which create poverty, so that actions can be directed towards its defeat, not perpetuation.

A registered charity, War on Want is governed by an elected Council of Management. Its head office is in a converted warehouse in Holloway, North London from where it administers its programmes at home and abroad. Around the country, War on Want is supported by thousands of individuals, as well as local groups and charity shops.

Membership is open to all who agree with the basic aims of fighting poverty and injustice by investigating and exposing its causes and by giving support to organised groups of the poor striving for self-reliance, power and dignity. members receive mailings about War on Want's activities and are invited to participate in campaigns. They are entitled to vote (or stand) for the Council of Management, to attend general meetings and help determine policy.

The annual membership fee for individuals is £3.50 or £1.00 for students, claimants and OAPs.

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A child victim of  
the Soweto uprisings.

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## Guide to commonly used acronyms

(International Trade Secretariats separately listed in Chapter 8)

AAFLI	Asian-American Free Labour Institute
AALC	African-American Labour Centre
AIFLD	American Institute for Free Labour Development
AFL	American Federation of Labour
AFRO	African Regional Organisation (ICFTU)
ARO	Asian Regional Organisation (ICFTU)
ATUC	Africa Trades Union Congress
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CIO	Congress of Industrial Organisations
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (US)
CGIL	Italian General Confederation of Labour
CGT	French Confederation of Labour
CLAT	Confederation of Latin America Workers
COMACH	Chile Maritime Union
CUT	Chilean National Trade Union Centre
CUPROCH	Confederation of Chilean Professionals
CWA	Communication Workers of America
DGB	German Trade Union Confederation
ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FO	Force Ouvriere
FNV	Federation of Netherlands Trade Unions
FTUC	Free Trade Union Confederation
GSEE	Greek National Trade Union Conference
HISTADRUT	Israeli Confederation of Labour
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
INTUC	Indian National Trade Union Conference
IRIS	Industrial Research Information Services
ILGWU	International Ladies Garment Workers Union
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ITSS	International Trade Secretariats
ISF	International Solidarity Fund
LO	Swedish Trade Union Confederation
MNCs	Multinational Companies
MAWU	Metal and Allied Workers Union (South Africa)
OATUU	Organisation of African Trade Union Unity
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
ORIT	Inter-American Regional Office (ICFTU)
OPIC	Overseas Private Investment Corporation
RAI	Research Associate International
TGWU	Transport and General Workers Union
TUC	Trades Union Congress
UAW	United Auto Workers

ULCN United Labour Congress of Nigeria  
WCL World Confederation of Labour  
WFTU World Federation of Trade Unions

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Correction:

The third and fourth paragraphs on page 3 should read as follows:

At present they are currently engaged in planning a world-wide journal for trade unionists which will be backed up by personnel and sources to handle trade union inquiries direct. At present they already work with a number of independent and academic research groups in different countries and hope to open up an office in Europe to assist this work.

Larson's experiences were the same as my own — a deliberate withholding of information by trade union leaders to the rank and file about aspects of their international work.

There are, however, attempts being made, with varying degrees of success, by some national trade union centres and some unions to actively promote dialogue and raising of consciousness on these issues. Only time will tell whether these can be successful when it is fostered from above. In Belgium, Holland, Sweden and to a lesser extent Germany such attempts are being made.

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## Introduction

This report is about an area of our trade union life that is shadowy, endlessly complicated and at present largely beyond the control of ordinary workers. It concerns the state of "our" international solidarity and the way it connects with the poor of the earth.

The idea for the report flowed logically from previous War on Want inquiries into different aspects of multinational company exploitation of the Third World poor like "The State of Tea," which exposed the plight of the Sri-Lanka tea estate labourers at the hands of British companies or, "The Baby Killer," which showed how the promotional methods of Western baby food companies in the Third World was helping to add to infant deaths. With these reports and others some positive change resulted, but it seemed then as now that a stronger countervailing force was required and that our trade union movement was such a force. Study of its present day work in this field I thought might help efforts to begin undertaking organised resistance to the company giants.

While aspects of that original inquiry remain, and are contained mainly in the latter section of this report, the fact was that it was impossible to undertake this research without being sucked into the poisonous real politics that surround international trade unionism. Numerous trade union officials in a position to know some or all of what was going on refused to speak or if they did so it was in vague generalities. Moreover I was soon to learn that hardly any detailed information was provided to ordinary workers about "their" international work. It is the case that in the UK and, I suspect, in numerous other countries there can be few workers who can claim they know what is done overseas with their money, and in their name, through the international trade union machinery.

Some trade union officials questioned why War on Want should be nosing around in this field and why in turn they should give information to us.

It should be said that the War on Want staff is unionised. We pay, like millions of other workers, towards trade union international programmes and so, like them, have the right to know what is being done overseas in our name. It is also the case that War on Want works with a few Third World trade unions and this arguably gives us some justification to intervene in a debate that previously has largely taken place behind closed doors.

There is a third and compelling reason why we claim the right to intervene. No Third World organisation like War on Want can now be unaware about the pressing problems of the erosion of human rights in increasing numbers of countries.

It is the view of the author that one of the great bastions of human rights is the trade union movement and that trade union rights are everyone's rights. Historically this is proven to be the case in the western hemisphere, but in the Third World it is a contemporary and commonplace reality. It is the case that

many Third World unions, no matter how small, remain the only organised force to resist generalised state oppression.

What spurred me to continue this inquiry was a suspicion, now grown into certain knowledge, that some of these Third World unions have been divided and weakened under the cover of the international trade union movement in turn making wholesale oppression more likely.

While it may be the case that through lack of co-operation by certain trade union leaders and officials this report could contain certain injustices, or at least not provide adequate space to the positive aspects of "our" international solidarity, it seems to me that no matter what injustice has been done inadvertently it may be as nothing to the injustice that has been done to many of the Third World poor under the banner of the trade union movement or indeed to the rank and file in the northern hemisphere who don't know that is being done overseas in their name.

It will be known to a number of trade union officials that every effort has been made to get "the other side," and indeed this publication was delayed by some months while efforts were made to do so again. It should also be said that parts or all of this report were made known to certain trade union leaders in the hope they could help provide a balanced picture. Wherever possible I have only made charges when documented evidence has become available or when the information came from more than one reputable source. During most of the interviews I was accompanied by a witness.

Faced with a situation where it took me a considerable time even to collect together notes for the opening and historical section because of the paucity of written information, it seemed at times that I had embarked upon a hopelessly ambitious venture. A breakthrough came, however, in 1977 when I learned of the existence of Research Associate International (RAI) and Transnational Feature Services (TFS) then based in California. From that point on, this report became a joint research collaboration between War on Want and Rodney Larson of RAI with numerous letters exchanged between the two in the months that followed to help build up a necessary bank of information for this report.

In 1975 RAI and TFS had begun publication of a regular press service devoted to the dissemination of information on multinationals, governmental policies affecting multinationals, international economics and trade and their relationship to national and multilateral governmental programmes. They also, however, proved to be a main source of independent and detailed information on the international trade union movement.

Their staff, almost completely volunteer or paid at subsistence level, is led by ex-California trade union official Rodney Larson. They quickly found, he says, that archives and collections of basic trade union data did not exist in the US except for two or three academic institutions (at least one of which the New York Times has exposed as a CIA operation) or in government offices. Since 1975 RAI and TFS have devoted a major part of their time, effort and money to the acquisition and analyses of a data base that now includes a very large amount of governmental information on these themes and a current and broad collection of material on the international trade union movement.

They are presently engaged in increasing this collection of invaluable material and have been, since 1975, broadly distributing it to the trade union movements in different countries, but primarily those in the Third World.

Said Larson, "RAI and TFS have always depended upon voluntary contributions, literature sales and private income of their staff to conduct these operations. They have never received any funding from any government or corporate source either directly or indirectly."

At present they are currently engaged in planning a world-wide journal for trade unionists which will be backed up by personnel and sources to handle trade union inquiries direct. At present they already work with a number of independent and academic research groups in different countries and hope to open up an international work. The result is that, at least in part, the consciousness of the There are, however, attempts being made, with varying degrees of success, by some national trade union centres and some unions to actively promote dialogue and raising of consciousness on these issues. Only time will tell whether these can be successful when it is fostered from above. In Belgium, Holland, Sweden and to a lesser extent Germany such attempts are being made.

The intention of this report, however, is to try and prise open some space between the suffocating east-west conflict that envelops the present official structures and try to give a hint of what it all means when viewed from a Third World point of view. To that end I should gratefully acknowledge the assistance given me by some Third World trade unionists and those trade union leaders here at home who did agree to speak to me. My thanks also to Peter Waterman at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, for giving me advice on some sections of the report and also to Ake Wedin of the Swedish L.O. National Trade Union Centre whose published account of events inside the ICFTU in the fifties and sixties was to prove an enormous help.

Although I wrote this report, it is very much the result of joint research with Rodney Larson. Despite serious illness, he worked unsparingly after joining me in London. Without him, and his considerable knowledge of international trade union structures, it would have been a poor thing indeed. Maybe in time it won't be so unusual for trade unionists in different countries to collaborate in like manner. Maybe then there will be a different, happier story to be told about trade union internationalism.

Above all my thanks to my colleagues at War on Want. It is a brave thing for a little Third World charity to publish a report of this kind. It deserves a commensurate response from those trade union officials who have remained too quiet for too long. The report is dedicated to those peasant and worker movements in the Third World who, unlike them, have refused to keep silent when they had a great deal more to lose, and to my wife Lesley who was a constant support when the going got tough.

Don Thomson, July 1978.



## Chapter 1

**We have need of history in its entirety, not to fall back into it, but to see if we can escape from it — Jose Ortega Y. Gassett, "The Revolt of the Masses."**

Whatever strand you unwind of our international trade union solidarity, it usually brings you to some government office or another, like the US State Department or the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

In both countries it's difficult for ordinary trade unionists to understand what is going on. The same is true throughout Western and Eastern Europe. In all these countries trade union international bureaucracies play things close to their chest. Many do their best to discourage rank and file inquiry.

In the US, for instance, it's commonly known that the American Federation of Labour — Congress for Industrial Organisation (AFL-CIO), equivalent to Britain's Trades Union Congress (TUC) has some kind of overseas programme.

It regularly presses recommendations on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. During the Vietnam war years its angry criticism of labour "backsliders" singed the airwaves.

What the AFL-CIO actually does overseas is something else again. You might try to get a labour court of inquiry into it, or enlist the services of a Senator to set up a government investigation.

Alternatively you might try, like some members of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) in 1975, to press your own leadership to explain what's been going on. They were thrown out of the Convention Hall.\*

All this and more has been done. At the end you're left with a dribble of facts and half-facts and the sinking sensation that it has all helped emasculate British and European trade union internationalism, already anyway dislocated from the rank and file and spinning in its own orbit of inter-government connections.

What is shimmeringly clear is that the AFL-CIO can drum up more cash for international work in one year than the TUC does in a decade. Financial sponsors range from anti-labour Presidents like Richard Nixon through to top industrialists.

Less clear is the way it meshes in with the overseas work of the European unions, not least the TUC. At first sight the latter looks luminously different. The TUC presses at its conferences for programmes of political action, the AFL in 1895 insisted that "party politics of whatever kind should have no place in conventions". The TUC is built on the strength of the industrial and unskilled, the AFL-CIO has a craft-union mentality (although in fact the bulk of its membership is from industrial unions).

\*The protesters also produced a booklet "CIA and CWA." written by Cynthia Sweeney and published by members of Local 1500, c/o P.O. Box 8155, San Diego, California, 92102.



It's hard to see much scope for practical collaboration between the two — until, that is, you start to unearth the direction of western trade union overseas work. Then you enter a subterranean world where a relationship of sorts exists. It's hardly inspirational, for most of its details are secreted away. Nor can it be said to be filled with fellow feelings for the poor of the earth. Too often they have been the victims.

### The union splitters gather

The history of the American trade unions is largely the story of the AFL. Its other half, the CIO, was born out of the New Deal and upsurge of a mass organising and sometimes revolutionary socialist movement in the thirties before absorption into the AFL in the middle fifties. In 1890, rejecting a move to incorporate the New York section of the Socialist Labour Party (SLP) into the AFL, Samuel Gompers, AFL founder and leader, spelled out this frequently quoted definition of American trade unionism: "Unions pure and simple are the natural organisations of the wage workers to secure their present and practical improvement and to achieve their final emancipation."

The dispute with the SLP was to mark the beginnings of a rift between the American unions and their European counterparts, the ligaments of which remain today. The SLP established its own union wing and the British and European unions sided with it. In 1893, after the European unions refused to attend an AFL sponsored international congress in Chicago, the AFL was to become fiercely independent. Gompers insisted on a formal separation of trade union and political action, whatever the reality.

The need to get overseas union support to stop "blacklegs" being shipped into the States improved relations between the AFL and European unions. By 1911 the AFL had joined the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU). After World War I it claimed credit for writing into the Versailles treaty the labour conventions that were to help establish the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

In 1921, however, Gompers stormed out of the IFTU. He complained it was "led by the so-called intelligentsia whose political views have no place in the hearts of those who would secure and fight for freedom and preserve democracy." Many affiliated American unions, however, remained linked to their respective International Trade Secretariats (ITSs), the trade internationals of different unions. Among the first, and still surviving, the Miners International started in 1889. The ITSs, serving each of the main industrial groups, had a number of purposes. They exchanged union cards across frontiers so that immigrant workers could stick to the same trade, and they could prevent strike breaking by stopping overseas transfer of production or use of foreign scab labour.

They remain a vital part of international trade unionism. Few, however, were to escape the maelstrom that was to descend over worker international solidarity. That story began in the 1930s.

### Meany takes over

With Europe and the States in the grip of an economic depression in the early

thirties international affairs were at a low ebb. Then two events took place that had far-flung consequences.

The first was that some European trade unionists seeking refuge from Fascism came to New York to be received by some city trade unionists. David Dubinsky, who had forged a strong union in the city's sweat shops, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU)\* was organising city help for them. He was assisted by George Meany, a tough Catholic-Irish New Yorker from a plumber's family in the Bronx. After his apprenticeship Meany became a full-time AFL union organiser in the American business-union tradition, and worked with Dubinsky to start the "German Labour Chest" to help refugees get to the States. Some of these labour refugees had the right kind of qualities, and organisational flair, to attract them to the attention of the US Office of Strategic Services (OSS) precursor of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). They were later directed back into the labour field.

The second event was that two Detroit car workers, the brothers Walter and Victor Reuther, returned from Gorky, Russia, where they had helped establish a Ford-type car plant.

In 1932 Walter's union work in Ford's Detroit plant had cost him his job. Learning that the Soviet Amtorg Company was keen to recruit highly skilled car workers, the brothers went there, meeting European labour leaders on the way. They returned to the States in 1935 determined to help organise the industrial and unskilled workers. In the same year they helped form the Congress for Industrial Organisation (CIO), built largely on the strength of the carworkers and miners.

The CIO was to attract six million members and become inseparably associated with the Reuthers and the wave of bloody battles and sit-ins that hit the car industry in particular during the struggles for union recognition. The Reuther forces were locked in battle against company thugs, state militia and even, sometimes, hired killers — both Walter and Victor were shot down and seriously injured. They were also, however, battling against the AFL. They accused it of failure to organise industrial workers and siding with the bosses to try and destroy the CIO. The AFL retaliated that the CIO had been penetrated by Communists.

The CIO was eventually weakened by growing anti-Communist hysteria. A running battle between Trotskyists and "Stalinists" further diluted its strength in the late thirties and early forties. Even the Reuthers were to come close to expulsion from their own union, the United Auto Workers (UAW). Homer Martin, UAW President, called in ex-Communists Jay Lovestone and Irving Brown, "labour consultants", who specialised in winking out "Communists". The idea was to get rid of the Reuther caucus, but the scheme backfired. It was Martin who was eventually got rid of. The Reuthers were never to forget Lovestone and Brown. Neither should we. They went on to play a major role in western trade union internationalism.

\*A number of US unions have the word "international" in their title based on their origin which usually included Canada, US colonies and dependencies.

### Windy resolutions

World War II helped bring the CIO into the mainstream of US political life. In the period afterwards, Communist leadership of some affiliated unions was jettisoned off with Walter Reuther by now firmly entrenched as President of its major affiliate, the UAW.

George Meany was also on his way to the top. As far back as 1943 he was being tipped as successor to AFL President Bill Green. During this period he was casting around for a niche he could claim for his own and found it in the AFL's international work. Poring over convention records he explained years later to his biographer, Joseph Goulden, that the international section contained "nothing but windy resolutions".[1]

Meany went to night school to learn Spanish and gradually took over the international section making new contacts and renewing old acquaintances, among them industrialist Nelson Rockefeller who had huge holdings in Latin America, and known to Meany from his New York days. Another person to play a key role was Matthew Woll of the photo-engravers union and a member of the AFL hierarchy. In addition, Woll was a wealthy insurance entrepreneur.

Through his previous association with David Dubinsky in New York, Meany then got to take on as his right hand man the same Jay Lovestone who had tried to purge the Reuthers from the UAW. The CIO's Secretary Treasurer, James Carey, used to charge that Meany won Lovestone from Dubinsky in a game of gin rummy. However it happened, it was one of the strangest ever appointments in US labour circles.

### Meany gets his man

Lovestone was born in Lithuania (real name Jacob Liebstein). He came to New York at the age of ten and became a Socialist in his teens. After graduating from college with an accounting degree he went on, in 1919, to become the second Secretary General of the American Communist Party after engineering a split in the Socialist Party. He lost his trappings of power after a row with Stalin at the 1928 Communist International Congress. It centred around Lovestone's support for Nikolai Bukharin, expelled for doctrinal heresy. Lovestone refused to repudiate Bukharin and was promptly stripped of his party office. Lovestone failed to get reinstated even though he actively supported the 1934 purges. Finally he about-faced and started an anti-Communist Party Opposition. Among his adherents was Irving Brown. Their filtration into the US labour movement began in the mid-thirties and started when they helped Charles Zimmerman get elected head of a branch of the International Ladies Garment Workers.

Lovestone was anathema to Meany. "I wouldn't walk on the same side of the street as him" Meany once swore.[2] Their first recorded meeting was in the mid-thirties when Lovestone was working for a Jewish newspaper. "It wasn't love at first sight," Meany was to recall, "when I first saw him he was having a hell of a tough time. The Communists hated him, and the anti-Communists wanted no part of him." [3]



Walter Reuther. He loathed Lovestone and Brown. (Planet News/TUC Library).

David Dubinsky, Meany's old chum, got to know Lovestone and eventually hired him to head up the foreign affairs department of his own union where he remained for five years. In 1943 Dubinsky told Meany: "The son-of-a-bitch is O.K. He's been converted." [4]

Meany had his man. Now he needed the machinery. At Meany's request Lovestone drafted a resolution for the 1944 AFL Convention calling on the creation of a Free Trade Union Committee (FTUC) "to secure the assistance of American trade unions in rebuilding free and democratic trade unions in Europe, Asia and Central and Latin America." It was passed on the nod. Lovestone was made its head.

Right from the start there was some question about who actually controlled this committee. Labour researcher Roy Godson wrote, years later, "It was understood that FTUC was to some undefined extent an independent organisation, albeit sponsored by the AFL." [5]

One of the European refugees, the slight figure of Serafino Romualdi, who was recruited into the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), was one of the first to start working for the FTUC. He was sent to Latin America on the recommendation of the Under Secretary of State for Latin America, Nelson Rockefeller.

Romualdi, a refugee from Mussolini's Italy, later connected with extreme right wing groups in the US like the John Birch Society, was to relish his Latin America job. He was placed there to help break up the leftist Latin America Trade Union Federation (CTAL) which was supported by the CIO.

Lovestone then pulled in his old comrade Irving Brown. Brown at that point was working for the US government's European Recovery Programme. In 1945 he got his instructions to go back there again. His job was to help break up the European Communist-led unions while operating from an office in the ritzy Rue de la Paix in Paris as FTUC European representative.

Finally there was Lovestone himself. A bachelor with no apparent hobbies, he would read voluminously behind his thick lens glasses or settle down to write page after page of closely typed analyses of the latest manoeuvrings in the USSR politbureau. He was later to serve on the board of the American Security Council to "help companies screen personnel for Communist affiliation or sympathy." Trade unionists complained it ruined many innocent people.

Years later, in 1976, the Washington Post said about Lovestone: "Those who know him maintain that he has a totalitarian personality that has been carried over from one world to another. They see him as a man who, disillusioned with the God he once worshipped, evokes its image everywhere so that he might continue to curse and flog it in an endless psychological rite of expiation..."

The same year Victor Reuther observed about Lovestone, "He was one of the cleverest, most machiavellian union splitters ever." [6] It remains hard to gauge the significance of this team. Some labour researchers now argue, however, that they played a major part in saving Europe from Communism in the post war years. [7]

More central today is the gulf of thinking between "Gomperism", the view that trade unionism is nothing to do with politics, and the ambiguous relationship, in Britain's case at least, between trade unionism and labour politics.

Denis Edwards, veteran leader of the Miners International Federation (MIF) reflects that in its hey-day the CIO was largely led by the American miners. He recalled that in 1976 when he and Joe Gormley, President of the National Union of Mineworkers, attended a US Miners Convention, one of the delegates spotted the pair and moved a point of order to warn—"There are Socialists in this hall."

Said Edwards, "There doesn't seem much attempt at understanding or distinguishing between British type labour politics and Communism. That problem has been with us for years."

It was a problem that exploded into the Third World with the creation in 1949 of a new international, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

## Bibliography to Chapter 1.

1. "Meany" Joseph C. Goulden, Athenium, New York, 1972.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. "The AFL Foreign Policy making process from the end of World War II to the Merger" Roy Godson, Labour History, Volume 16, No 3, 1975.
6. "The Brothers Reuther and the Story of the UAW — A Memoir" Victor Reuther, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1976.
7. Among those suggesting the AFL international team played a major part in halting Communist advances in post-war Europe has been the labour researcher Carl Gresham, "The Foreign Policy of American Labour" The Washington Papers, 29 Beverley Hills and London, Sage Publications. A claim to the same effect was made in 1977 by A. Lowenthal, national executive staff person of the American Federation of Teachers when introducing Irving Brown to the rostrum of the union's convention.

## Chapter 2

**“Why shouldn’t covert action be acceptable in peace time to try and prevent the possibility of war?” Irving Brown, speaking to the American Federation of Teachers, 1977.**

Sir Walter Citrine, TUC General Secretary between 1926 and 1946, was among the first to feel the new iron edge to the AFL’s international work. In 1942 he went to the AFL Convention to report that the British public was “in a state of almost unreasoning admiration for the Soviets”, believing they had saved Britain from invasion.

He wanted an Anglo-American-Soviet labour alliance created. The AFL would have no part of it. President Bill Green said there was “a different situation, a different state of mind, a different psychology” in the US. They could never join with the Russians.

Citrine went ahead with his plans despite more failed attempts to get the AFL involved. A trade union unity conference was held in London in 1945. The CIO, the United Mine Workers and the Railway Brotherhood — all outside the AFL — attended from the US alongside the Soviet bloc. The upshot was the achievement of a dream of years — a single workers international, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). The same year the WFTU demanded and received recognition as spokesman for world labour at the founding conference of the United Nations.

There were hopes that the AFL would join. There were reports that some of the hierarchy feared isolation, but by then Meany and Lovestone were beginning to exert their grip. In his top floor office, assisted by reports from Irving Brown in Paris, Lovestone drew up a clinical assessment of this new international.

Parts of it were used to rebuff some AFL executive committee members, and parts in a public speech by Meany in April 1945. It so horrified the US government that they successfully introduced voluntary press censorship to avoid upsetting US-Anglo-Soviet relations.

In one extract Meany said the WFTU was “an odd combination of British imperialism and Soviet Communism” and went on — “Fifteen of the 35 countries represented are British dominions and colonies, seven of which have no bona fide labour movements. The British government had recruited leaders and flown them to the London conference to bolster up British representation. Under the weighted voting system the Soviets will still have 27 million votes, the British only six million.”

During the last years of the war the AFL team and the British had worked together in covert action using, for instance, the London based International Transport Workers Federation to maintain contact with underground groups in Europe.

The peace-time continuation of covert activities by the AFL began to cause concern.

In post war France Communists had been elected to the leadership of the General Confederation of Labour (CGT). In the process labour leaders who had served, or served under, the Germans were kicked out. According to Brown in letters\* sent to the AFL and later found in the personal effects of secretary Florence Thorne "This has been done unjustly under Communist instigation and ... contributed to the lack of manpower on the non-Communist side."

Brown's programme was to link with some of the CGT unions, finance them with secret funding and get them to split away from the CGT. When they were strong enough they were encouraged to form an opposing national centre — the Force Ouvriere (FO) today France's third largest and most right wing national trade union centre.

Brown was also involved in helping to break up the wave of French strikes in 1947 led by Communist unions refusing to handle US Marshall Aid consignments. He was particularly active in the Mediterranean ports according to Victor Reuther. Members of the Corsican mafia led by Pierre Fissani terrorised dockworkers refusing to handle the shipments. Some dockers were killed. Unions were also split in Italy, Greece and North Africa. In Germany secret funding helped Social Democrats solidify the German Federation of Labour (DGB). The head of one ITS told me it was only in recent years that the German unions had managed to purge themselves of the consequences of this concealed funding.

### The state connection

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was formed out of the OSS in 1947. We find from a report by Thomas W. Braden, European director of the CIA from 1950-54: "Lovestone and his assistant Irving Brown ... needed it [CIA cash] to pay off strong arm guards in the Mediterranean ports so that American supplies could be unloaded ... ¼ With funds from Dubinsky's union they organised the Force Ouvriere ... When they ran out of money they appealed to the CIA. Thus began the secret funding of trade unions ... (Thomas W. Braden, "I'm glad the CIA is immoral", Saturday Evening Post, May 20, 1967.) Meany has called Braden "a damned liar".

Victor Reuther, who was asked to run the CIO European office in Paris in the post-war years (in part, he admits, so he could keep an eye on Brown) was to write that Brown was receiving "incredibly large funds from some US government source to get European trade unions in his pocket." [1] Reuther alleges they were CIA funds.

During these critical years the WFTU, which was based in Paris, simply fell to pieces and finally was split asunder in 1949. The most commonly advanced reason was Communist majority opposition to US Marshall Aid, but a more telling reason may have been the role of the various International Trade Secretariats. They were proud of their traditional independence, but the WFTU was determined to convert them into departments of the organisation.

\*Brown's letters are in the archive section of the University of Wisconsin.

Crucial in this row, which gave the western delegates a trade union reason for departing, was the particularly fierce opposition to amalgamation that came from the Trade Secretariats with a large US membership like the International Metalworkers Federation (IMF) and the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF).

In 1949 the western delegates packed their bags and deserted. Shortly afterwards the WFTU was kicked out of Paris, then again from Vienna, and then finally settled in Prague where it remains today.

### Communist fears

Within a space of a few months the Western unions were meeting in London to regroup and form their own international, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). This time they had the AFL with them, and this time too there was no doubt about the moving spirit of this international — it was there to oppose Communism and above all the WFTU.

The atmosphere at the founding conference was charged with anti-Communist fears. Union leaders were anxious about Communist inroads in



London, March 1947 — and the break-up of the WFTU is well underway. The previous month the WFTU refused to call a meeting on the US Marshall Aid plan. Now a private conference is taking place in London attended by European and US trade union officials in favour of the Marshall plan. Pictured arriving for the conference from the US is (left) Paul Porter and (right) a man who was to become a controversial figure in the world of trade union internationalism, Irving Brown. (New York Times Photos/TUC)

France and Italy, some of them fearing virtual eclipse. In the ruins of post-war Berlin it looked as though the better organised, and better funded, Communist unions would take overall control of the city unions.

The previous year the TUC had sternly warned it was going to resist further Communist incursions into the British unions—“We shall fight this issue through to the finish”, Citrine’s successor, Vincent Tewson, declared.

One of the most telling episodes was the rapid metamorphosis of the Scandinavian unions. They were in the forefront of those worried and complaining about the cold war policy of the AFL. This changed overnight, however, with the bloodless Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia.

From that time on Meany was to use Czechoslovakia as a warning of what happens when Communists dominate the trade unions.

Previously trade union internationalism had been mainly confined to the northern hemisphere. This time, of the 55 countries represented at the ICFTU founding conference, 33 came from the Third World. They represented a total Third World membership of ten million. This was to rise by more than 80 percent during the next fifteen years. It looked possible that a truly global international could be in the making.

If there was a flicker then of what was in store for the Third World, however, it would have been found in the Latin America activities of Serafino Romualdi. At the 1946 AFL Convention he launched an attack on the State Department for supporting those on the continent “who are enemies of the American way of life and who are followers of the Communist Party line.”

The attack succeeded. The State Department, assisted by Rockefeller and other industrialists, cleared the way for him to approach Latin American governments and get a new regional labour federation started, the Inter-America Regional Organisation (ORIT).

It was adopted as the western hemispheric wing of the new ICFTU, and therefore by all the main western trade union movements.

## Chapter 3

“In the 20 years of its existence the ICFTU has rooted itself so deeply in the thoughts and actions of the workers of the free world, has contributed so decisively to the rise of free trade unionism in the developing countries, that the question comes to mind what had happened to the idea of trade union internationalism before its foundation?”  
ICFTU 20-year report, 1949-69.

The British unions had most contact with the Third World through the colonial experience, but it was patchy.

In many of the colonies trade unions barely existed. In the Gold Coast (later Ghana) trade union legislation existed before the unions. In others, unions were usually confined to a small urban minority. Throughout Asia, Africa and the Caribbean the unions which did exist were usually modelled on the British pattern.

Their weakness reflected the lack of a sizeable working class. This began to change from the late thirties onwards. There was a rapid growth of industry which was to become important for the war-effort. Caribbean trade unionists, for instance, still warmly remember visits during the war years by Citrine and others from the TUC giving organising advice and assistance.

The burst for national independence strengthened the Third World unions. In many countries they were one of the few power blocs around which the anti-colonial struggle could be mobilised. Before and after independence some TUC members worked themselves into the ground giving help.

The fact that the British trade union movement, unlike their European counterparts, escaped the war unscathed gave them a commanding position within the new ICFTU. It was important, however, to lock in with the AFL. This combination of experience and wealth was needed to carry the ICFTU through the first difficult years.

Whatever worries the British had about the AFL’s foreign policy were overshadowed by the belief that proper trade union unity might have helped stopped the rise of Fascism. This time there could be no similar mistake.

Jay Lovestone was unconvinced. He had urged Meany to keep the AFL outside the new ICFTU. He said the British would use it to exercise proprietorial rights over their past and present colonies. He thought TUC opposition to Communism too spindly to make them trustworthy.

Meany, however, was playing a different game. By now the CIO was running out of steam. It looked possible there could be a merger between the two, but they remained poles apart of foreign policy. The presence of both inside the ICFTU would mean, said Meany, that they might be able to mesh out these differences.

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1. The Brothers Reuther.



Both were appalled, however, when the ICFTU elected TUC General Secretary Vincent Tewson — “the knighted nut,” Lovestone called him — as its President. For the next two years the AFL boycotted the ICFTU which had been set up in Brussels with a staff size that, at one stage, was to climb to over 100.

In 1953, however, Meany set out to do battle with Tewson at the ICFTU Stockholm Congress. He attacked almost every major point made by Tewson who was calling for a cooling down of anti-Soviet feelings.

Tewson did not bother to run for re-election. Meany pushed through changes in the ICFTU structure increasing the powers of newcomers like the Israeli Confederation of Labour, Histadrut.

It was to be a few years yet, however, before the ICFTU was to properly embrace the Third World. It was still concerned with building up the organisation and establishing links with the United Nations.

Fees were scaled according to membership size. It meant that the Americans, British, Scandinavians and Belgians (the German unions were still in disarray) would pay the bulk. Different scales were applied to solve the problem of impoverished Third World unions (the current formula is payment scales of no less than seven different grades). Regional structures were created for each of the continents and each given a high degree of autonomy. This global balance was to be reflected in the ICFTU executive.

The organisation, however, was overwhelmingly Western European oriented and anti-Communist. Funds were raised to help victims of the Berlin blockade, the Polish, East-German and then Hungarian uprisings. On each occasion, however, the ICFTU Secretariat had to make special appeals to its affiliates for funds. Overwhelmingly it was US cash that was used. Lovestone argued that the ICFTU would have done nothing at all about Communist outrages if it hadn't been prodded by the AFL.

On one occasion he told Meany: “The ICFTU bureaucracy is dead. Its carcass is irritating to the nostrils and a pain for the international labour movement.” He said the people running the ICFTU were “a cheap group of semi-skilled bandits” deliberately affronting the AFL by appeasing Communist and neutralist nations.[1]

To avoid future delay, it was agreed that a permanent fund be created: the International Solidarity Fund (ISF) to be replenished every three years by the ICFTU affiliates.

### The merger

In 1955 the AFL and CIO finally merged. It provided the best chance to depose Lovestone and his team.

The Reuther forces tried to bring the international section fully under the control of the new combined AFL-CIO executive and push for Lovestone's replacement. The last seemed on the cards, for Victor Reuther was by then full time specialist in international affairs for the UAW and had extensive overseas connections. It looked a good bet that he would replace Lovestone.

Meany outmanoeuvred the Reuthers. Lovestone was moved to the New York office to escape the flak and was subsequently appointed full time head of the international affairs department. Meany was meanwhile appointed President of the AFL-CIO and with it in the tradition of the office got total control over international affairs. He and Lovestone were now ready to expand their activities, particularly into Africa.

### The hidden years

The ICFTU met for their 1957 Congress in Tunis with its major affiliates the British, Canadians, Germans and Swedes already agreed about the idea of a Solidarity Fund. A question mark hung over the Americans. Some thought they were intent on starting their own independent programmes, others that they needed the contacts of the British and others to operate wider afield. Over 200 delegates waited expectantly as Irving Brown rose to his feet. Brown, however, merely talked about the need to maintain an anti-Communist line.

A Fund committee was appointed comprising ICFTU General Secretary, Dutchman Jacob Oldenbroek, who had held that position from the start, and four others from Canada, West Germany, Scandinavia and the U.K. Third World unions were not represented as they were possible beneficiaries of the cash. The target set for the Solidarity Fund was two million pounds over the next three year period (1957-1960).

The same Congress elected Arne Geijer from the Swedish Metalworkers as President. Geijer and Oldenbroek were faced with a tricky problem right from the start. With a target that size it would be important to get the co-operation of the Americans; at the same time they had to ensure they would not dominate Solidarity Fund spending policy.

The first meeting of the Fund committee took place a few months later. TUC General Secretary Vincent Tewson was elected chairman. The committee, which left an empty chair for an American place, then learned the Americans were planning their own independent Africa labour centre. It would be on a collision course with one planned by the ICFTU. Geijer, Tewson, Oldenbroek and others decided to fly to the States and tackle the AFL-CIO executive head on at their Atlantic City convention, none of them, with the exception of Geijer, confident of success.

They accomplished more than even Geijer expected. The AFL-CIO plan to invest 50,000 dollars into the Africa labour centre was converted instead into a grant for the ICFTU scheme. In addition the AFL-CIO agreed to give a million dollars to the Solidarity Fund. It had a lot to do with private discussions with Walter Reuther who wanted Lovestone and Brown's power weakened.

Meany and Lovestone were to extract a heavy price. Meany's first target was ICFTU General Secretary Oldenbroek. He would have to go. Oldenbroek was an old railway hand, recruited from the International Transport Workers Federation. It was a long standing complaint by the Americans that they'd never know where he was and would have to phone around Europe usually to find him staying at



some railway hotel. True or not, it fitted the picture they were peddling of an organisation that was slothful. Oldenbroek felt an almost paternal responsibility for the ICFTU. He made it clear he would not tolerate US inroads at the expense of the organisation. He was as cold as ice towards Meany.

First hint of open trouble came at the Brussels 1959 Congress. After it was announced that the Solidarity Fund target of two million pounds had been reached Meany said its use would depend on the structures created overseas — “we are not going to let the dead hand of bureaucracy, no matter where it exists, keep us from helping these people in Africa and Asia.”

Everyone present knew this to be an attack on Oldenbroek. Meany regularly called him “The Bureaucrat”. Another expression the Americans coined for him was more significant, “The Banker”.

The row between the British and Americans was welling up. The TUC wanted low key trade union support work in Africa, building up from the grass-roots. The US wanted their own pattern established, the creation of national centres and then building down. The issue, however, went way beyond differences of custom.

With the independence tide sweeping Africa, and many African trade union leaders somersaulting into government positions, Meany and Co. thought the



The banner at this 1958 Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers' (USDAW) Conference holds out the promise that the ICFTU Solidarity Fund would bring workers together throughout the world. By this time events were taking place within the ICFTU that would help drive workers apart. (Sunbeam Photo/TUC Library)

British were handily placed to exercise influence on governments through previous trade union contacts.

The British however, were even more suspicious about US intentions. Their fears bubbled over at a 1959 TUC General Council meeting. There was talk about getting an AFL-CIO assurance that they would not undermine the “constructive line” the TUC was taking in Africa.\* Alleged confidential British cabinet papers purporting to show the issue was now a matter of government concern circulated in Africa.\*\*

British anxiety was centred around the figure of Irving Brown who had been given the New York post of ICFTU United Nations liaison officer.

As far back as 1955 the Swedish trade unions had complained that Brown's phobic anti-Communism was counter-productive — yet the same Irving Brown was now scampering off to Africa representing the ICFTU and AFL-CIO and pledging Solidarity Fund cash without it even being discussed by the ICFTU.

This was the background for “the Oldenbroek affair”. The ICFTU General Secretary was supporting the British line on Africa. It meant that cash was being spent slowly — hence his name “The Banker”.

After the 1959 ICFTU Congress, Meany threatened to withdraw his men and money unless Oldenbroek was removed. Tewson and Geijer succumbed. It was put to Oldenbroek that for the sake of the organisation it would be better if he went. It was a crushing blow to him, but two crucial deals were struck as conditions for departure.

Geijer forced the Americans to agree that if the ground for Oldenbroek's departure was “organisational inefficiency”, then the AFL-CIO had better chip in some money to remove its causes. The other was that Oldenbroek, and then Geijer, extracted a promise that on no account would the AFL-CIO start its own independent programmes.

There was one last retaliation from the British. In 1960 Tewson retired. His successor as TUC General Secretary, George Woodcock, immediately told the ICFTU he would not give any TUC money into the Solidarity Fund for the 1961-1963 period. There had been too much waste of money. It was going, he said, to artificial Third World union centres blunting local initiative to organise and raise dues.

The TUC denial of cash didn't last long, and didn't make any difference. The “fat years” had arrived for the ICFTU, and so too had Meany. He was now ensconced as chairman of the Solidarity Fund following Tewson's retirement.

The horse dealing over Oldenbroek's departure meant there was an unprecedented flow of cash for the Third World. In the 1960s, up to 1967, annual cash flow into the Solidarity Fund was always over the million dollar mark and in some years exceeded two million dollars.

In other circumstances it might have been a cause for celebration. In fact the structures were rotten. These years were to see the beginnings of a battle, very little of which seeped out to the rank and file, which haunted the Brussels headquarters and spilled over into the Third World.

\*Internal TUC document “Reassessment of the situation in British Africa”.

\*\*Annexe to a 1959 Cabinet paper, its origin and authenticity are uncertain.

## The lies

One cause of the trouble was that the Americans lied to both Oldenbroek and Geijer. They went black on their promise not to start independent programmes. The AFL-CIO and the State Department had previously assumed that Latin American labour was safely stitched up, but Castro's ascent in Cuba shook them. One response, in 1961, was to start an independent AFL-CIO western hemispheric trade union foundation which was to go on to have a huge budget, the American Institute for Free Labour Development (AIFLD).

At the same time they kept complete control over ORIT, the ICFTU's regional wing for Latin America and the Caribbean. Meany was so confident about US control that he offered to place a Briton in the hierarchy to quell rumours about the organisation, provided Irving Brown was given overall responsibility for Africa.

The deal was flatly refused. There were too many suspicions about Brown.

The man caught up in the middle of the row was Oldenbroek's successor, Belgian Omer Becu, whose election had been supported by the Americans. He had worked with them during the war years where his training as a maritime radio operator was used to keep in contact with European underground groups.



Oldenbroek (left) and Becu. Meany lied to both of them.

Becu, like Oldenbroek before him, had been recruited from the International Transport Workers Federation. He was unhappy about the Oldenbroek affair and was also, according to former colleagues determined to continue resistance to Meany.

By 1964, however, it looked as though he was helpless. That year saw the launching of the AFL-CIO's second independent programme. To some extent the ICFTU hierarchy had reconciled themselves to the first in Latin America believing, anyway, this was the US's own backyard. Not so with the second. This one was for Africa. It was to be headed up by Irving Brown from a New York office. He had been laying the groundwork for this move while going over there for the ICFTU.

A bizarre conflict of interests then developed, and was allowed to continue, despite Becu's frequent complaints. Brown, in addition to running the independent Africa programme, was still holding down the position of Director of the ICFTU's New York office, dealing with the United Nations.

It vividly revealed US power in Brussels. It also meant, incidentally, that the AFL-CIO retained an important window on the world through the UN. In 1973, the Swedish trade union confederation (popularly known as the L.O.) celebrated its 75th jubilee with the publication of some essays on the labour movement. One of these was an account of these years at the ICFTU by Ake Wedin, former head of the Swedish Labour movement's archives[2]. It serves to light up the cause of the final collapse.

Meany was getting increasingly tetchy with the ICFTU and with efforts to try and tone down the anti-Communist features of some projects. Lovestone wanted the AFL-CIO out of it altogether. In 1965 Meany told the AFL-CIO executive that the ICFTU had squirrelled away thousands of pounds in banks all over Europe and then demanded — and received — a proportionate share of the unspent Solidarity cash.

Then, despite being chairman of the Solidarity Fund Committee, he told the Dutch press, gathered for the ICFTU 1965 Amsterdam conference, that the money had been hoarded, badly used and concealed from the world. The ICFTU hierarchy furiously replied that they were being discredited before the world. They said reserves were essential.

What remained after Amsterdam were three painful years during which, according to Wedin, the other major Western affiliates, bitter and exhausted, finally gave up in the face of the American onslaught.

Wedin said about Meany, "Here was a person who, through his abrupt and sometimes offensive behaviour, made every form of collaboration impossible."

The ICFTU staff were among those at the receiving end. After the Amsterdam Congress Meany called an impromptu press conference at New York airport to declare: "The ICFTU is a stronghold of bureaucracy and has been infiltrated by homosexuals." (After the staff met to discuss suing him, he claimed he used the word "fairies", which, he said, had a non-homosexual meaning.)

Wedin was to conclude that there was orchestration behind the repeated AFL-CIO attacks. A clue to who was behind it came with the final break.



George Meany. His offensive behaviour made collaboration impossible said Ake Wedin.

The Reuther forces of the old CIO were meeting secretly from about the middle sixties. Believing they had been swallowed up by the AFL, and regretting the amalgamation, they opened up a civil war. The result was a flood of accusations about CIA money being channelled overseas through the AFL-CIO. The row simmered on for two years until finally, in 1968, the United Auto Workers, the Reuthers' stronghold, pressed the AFL-CIO leadership to call a special convention to thoroughly examine its action programme to revitalise "a stagnating labour movement". Two months later, the UAW refused to pay dues until the convention was called. Meany announced they were expelled.

The UAW then applied for membership of the ICFTU. It was seriously considered by Harm Buiter, successor to Becu who had resigned, dispirited and bitter, in 1967. Meany stormed that the ICFTU was helping to split the American labour movement. He debunked taking his men and money with him. He placed one condition for a possible return. The UAW affiliation request was to be blocked. That was agreed.

Meany later complained that the ICFTU had been making up to the Communist led French Confederation of Labour (CGT) and interfering in the internal affairs of US unions. There are others, however, who think the ICFTU had served its purpose. The AFL-CIO had no further need for it.

Ake Wedin was to reveal that Arne Geijer thought that the Americans should have been got rid of long before. Yet today both the TUC, the German DGB and the other main European centres have committed the ICFTU to the idea of an American return.

At the 1972 ICFTU Congress, present ICFTU General Secretary, Otto Kersten from Germany, picked up a theme that was to be repeated by him at the following 1975 Mexico City Congress.

"When the ICFTU and ITSs", he said in 1972, "are confronted with the leaders of General Motors and others, we shall need American trade unions in this trade union struggle. The Americans alone, like we alone, cannot solve the problems of multinational companies (MNCs)."

On page 26 are listed some of the MNCs who finance the AFL-CIOs overseas work.

### Bibliography to Chapter 3

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"You can't dictate to a country from any angle at all unless you control the means of production. If you don't control the means of production, you can't dictate. Whether you control them through ideological methods or control them by brute force, you must control them" — George Meany speaking at the House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Winning the Cold War: The US ideological offensive, 88th Congress, 1st Session, part two: April 30, 1963.

#### Some companies whn finance AFL-CIO's overseas work

W.R. Grace & Company	Brazilian Light & Power
Rockefeller Brothers Fund	First National Bank of Boston
International Telephone and Telegraph	United Fruit Company
Pan American World Airways	Anglo-Lautaro Nitrate Corporation
The United Corporation	IBM World Trade Corporation
David Rockefeller	International Basic Economy Corporation
Kennecott Copper Corporation	Sinclair Oil
Standard Oil Co. of New Jersey	Max Ascoli Fund Inc.
Koppers Company	International Mining Corporation
Gillette	Carrier Corporation
Shell Petroleum	Coca-Cola Export Corporation
Crown Zellerbach	Container Corporation of America
The Anaconda Company	Stauffer Chemical Company
ACFE ( Venezuela)	American-Standard
King Ranch	International Packers
Sterling Drug. Inc.	Olin
General Foods Corporation	Standard Oil of California
Loeb Rhoades & Company	Warner-Lambard
Owens-Illinois Glass	Corning Glass
Union Carbide Corporation	Eli Lilly & Company
Ebasco Industries	J. Henry Schroeder Banking Corporation
Reader's Digest	United Shoe Machinery
Monsanto	Celanese Corporation
Southern Peru Copper Corporation	Bacardi Corporation
Merck	Schering Foundation
Pfizer International	Bankers Trust Company
Otis Elevator Company	Bristol Myers
Industrias Kaiser Argentina	Chase Manhattan Bank
American Cyanamid	Kimberly-Clark
First National City Bank	Upjohn Company
International Paper Company	Insurance Company of North America
Mobil Oil Company	3M Company
Standard Fruit Company	American International Oil Company
American Telephone & Telegraph	Combustion Engineering
Corn Products	Sheraton Corporation of America
Council for Latin America	Chemetron Corporation
Johnson & Johnson	Motion Picture Association of America
St. Regis Paper Company	Deltec.
American Can Company	

Source: AIFLD, Senate Hearing, 1968, p.21

## Chapter 4

"Like freedom of meeting, freedom of opinion and expression forms part of the very life-blood of the trade unions. The function of the trade unions whether in pressing claims, hargaining, consultation, or helping to shape and implement social and economic policies can have meaning only on the basis of a free flow of information, opinion and ideas." Trade Union Rights and their Relation to Civil Liberties, I.L.O. report, Geneva, 1970.

Allan Hargreaves, TUC International Secretary, holds forth with a view of international solidarity that would make Samuel Gompers beam.

The TUC's overseas work, he says, is "non-political". The unions they support overseas are "non-political". Although the TUC is given the right to sit in on Labour Party international meetings, it's not reciprocated.

Hargreaves, however, argued that there was a "convergence of interest" between the two. It's not true.\*

The TUC appears to operate more closely with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). There is, for instance, a singular omission in the fifty-eight page international report to the 1977 TUC conference. It records that one of the international staff has been seconded, but doesn't say to where. In fact Michael Walsh has been put into the FCO for two years.

It's not unusual says John Millar, national officer at the Transport and General Workers Union (T & G) for trade union officials to be debriefed by the

#### TUC International Committee members, 1977/78

Chairman,	J. Jones, Transport and General Workers Union.
	M. Patterson " "
	H. Scanlon, Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers
	D. Bassett, General and Municipal Workers
	J. Slater, National Union of Seamen.
	G. Smith, Union of Construction Allied Trades and Technicians
	G. Lloyd " "
	R. Bottini, National Union of Agric. and Allied Workers.
	Lord Allen, Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers Union.
	T. Parry, Fire Brigades Union
	R. Buckton, Assoc Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen
	F. Jarvis, National Union of Teachers
	J. MacGoughan, National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers.
	T. Jackson, Union of Post Office Workers
	J. Gormley, National Union of Mineworkers

\*Among recent policy differences between the two have been conflicting views over the labour movements in Singapore and South Africa.

Footnote: In 1977 an AFL-CIO spokesman confirmed that companies still financed part of their overseas programme.

FCO on return from overseas. He thinks it should be stopped. The TUC also meets with the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) to discuss overseas matters. These are chaired by a junior minister from the FCO.

At one such meeting (in 1975 I think) there was talk about a joint channelling of funds into the Third World. It was rejected by the TUC who felt it could best do the job itself. In 1976 the Government and TUC met to discuss a plan to have government funds go into TUC Third World programmes. In 1977 it was agreed. The TUC is now receiving £75,000 a year.

It fits into a pattern that spread fast following the AFL-CIO departure from the ICFTU — an increasingly visible identity of interest between the international work of western trade union centres and the foreign policies of their governments.

The AFL-CIO was the first to exploit the fact that it could get more money, government money, by opening up independent programmes. The ICFTU, wed to the idea of free and independent unionism, is constitutionally unable to receive government cash direct into its Solidarity Fund. It does receive government money indirect, for instance Dutch government money channelled into the Federation of Netherlands Trade Unions (FNV) and then transferred into the Fund.

The financial trail now points away from the idea of a joint pool of trade union money, administered by trade unionists for the benefit of trade unionists. Something very different is happening.

The Germans were the first to follow the US lead. While remaining inside the ICFTU, trade union leaders got involved in different independent programmes for Third World unions. One is the programme run by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, its board comprising high ranking members of the Social Democratic Party and financed by government, business and unions. A parallel Christian Democratic body exists, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and another for the Liberal Party, the Nuemann Foundation.

A similar pattern of government involvement and financing of Third World unions has since sprung up in Holland, Sweden and Norway. Ake Wedin was to lament the implications at the end of his researches into the ICFTU.

He said about the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, for instance, "There are quite clear parallels between the expansionist German foreign trade policy and the work of this foundation."

Some of the same curiosities that abound in Europe pop up in the U.K. While the TUC produces a pile of literature for trade unionists, it has nothing about world poverty or a trade union response.

The Ministry of Overseas Development, concerned at this apparent lack of trade union interest forked out its own money in 1975 to fly two TUC General Council members, Clive Jenkins and David Basnett, to development projects in East Africa. Ministry officials, however, remain convinced, with good reason as I shall show, that TUC concern about the Third World is almost non-existent.

The same Ministry is now funding the TUC's own independent overseas programme.

It's also true that the Ministry, trying to get its aid down to the poor of

of the Third World, is now prepared to joint-fund the Third World work of non-government aid agencies, but there are differences between this and the TUC scheme. For instance, aid agencies have to get each project vetted by Ministry officials before government cash is given. With the TUC, however, the £75,000 has been handed over *carte blanche*, spending to be reviewed only at the end of each financial year. Moreover it's not altogether clear who will be reviewing the scheme. The two Ministry officials liaising with the TUC acknowledge they don't know much about Third World worker movements.

On the face of it, it's all bad news for the ICFTU. Its Solidarity Fund has now slumped to about half a million pounds a year despite repeated appeals by General Secretary Otto Kersten for the rich affiliates to chip in more.

The TUC meanwhile is now giving £420,000 a year toward the ICFTU running costs, that is about one third the entire TUC budget. It simply can't afford, it is said, to give upward of that figure to contribute to the Fund, and donations stopped a couple of years ago. Not a penny of the British government cash, however, will go to the Fund. It will be used bilaterally mainly for African and the Caribbean.

What the ICFTU accounts don't make altogether clear, however, is that there is a great deal more money flowing through its coffers for the Third World. This is cash from government, national trade unions and foundations. Crucially it is they — not the ICFTU — who decide who among the various ICFTU Third World affiliates receives it.

It has raised questions about the motives behind some of this spending and the degree of control exercised over it by the ICFTU. It also underlines the present day reality, the way government and others are increasingly making use of trade union channels to have an impact on the labour movements on the underside of the globe.

In the European basin the clearest cause for concern is the activities of the three German foundations linked to each of the main political parties. Between them they now spend millions of deutsch marks on Third World unions exporting their own political differences, and competing with each other, in the Third World. Little or no information about their activities is made available to the German rank and file, although the combined budget for all three between the years 1963-1972 amounted to over 269 million deutsch marks, mainly provided by the German equivalent to the Overseas Development Ministry.\*

### Out of touch

Allan Hargreaves argues that TUC conference reports are a "model for trade unions throughout the world". International affairs, he says, are reported in "pitiless detail". Yet the fifty-eight page international report to the 1977 conference contains only five paragraphs on ICFTU work in Latin America, one paragraph on Asian work and nothing at all about Africa.

\*Figures from the Anglo German Foundation for the Study of Industrial Society.



There has not been the slightest attempt made by the TUC to explain who in the Third World receives our money through the ICFTU or why.

Despairing of getting information from the TUC, I made enquiries from the American end. It finally took me back to this country and a glimpse into the underside of our trade union internationalism and the US connection.

Earlier I had met with Cyril Plant, former General Secretary of the Inland Revenue Staff Federation, previously chairman of the TUC and International Labour Office (ILO) Governing Board member. We talked about the problems of aiding Third World unions who didn't always represent the poor. He concluded, "perhaps it's time we tried a Socialist approach."

Months later, Lord Harry Douglas, former President of the TUC, was telling me about trade union officials who get conscience stricken about their bureaucratic roles and begin making left-wing noises. I reached him through the US embassy and one of their "retired labour attachés" in London, Joe Godson. I was now speaking to Lord Harry Douglas, President of Industrial Research Information Service (IRIS). IRIS, founded by a one-time member of the ICFTU information division, Jim Nash, to fight Communist influence in the unions was now, according to Lord Douglas, going through a revival. Lord Douglas said up to two hundred trade unionists were attending its meetings. It had a full-time staff. The unions were turning to the right and IRIS was having an influence.

Lord Douglas said IRIS had international connections, particularly in Australia and America. The last I could vouch for. IRIS material is used in AFL-CIO publications. Lord Douglas then agreed IRIS was "loosely connected" with a body I had been trying to trace, "The British Labour Committee for Trans-Atlantic Understanding."

The who? The Labour Party and TUC say they have never heard of it. It was, in fact, started by the same Joe Godson.

It lists ex-Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart as President, Tom Bradley M.P. as Chairman and Frank Chapple, General Secretary of the Electrical Electronic Telecommunications and Plumbing Union as Treasurer. It has its own press service. According to Godson (later confirmed in America) Meany has endorsed distribution of its material to US news outlets. Harold Wilson has written for them.\* It works from an office in Whitehall and has a full-time staff.

In a letter to me in June, 1977, one of their M.P. members, Alan Lee Williams, O.B.E., said the committee was "... a voluntary organisation which works under the umbrella of the British Atlantic Committee. Its objects include maintaining friendly relations with member countries of the Atlantic Alliance and, of course, supplying information and facts about the labour movements within the Alliance."

Allan Hargreaves represents the TUC on the British Atlantic Committee. Its Committee for Trans-Atlantic Understanding offshoot appears to be associated with the US National Strategy Information Centre (NISC), whose board comprises largely businessmen and military personnel, but hardly any labour people.

\*"The political plague with no boundaries" an article on Euro-Communism by Wilson written for the Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding, published in the Guardian Weekly, November 1, 1977.



Allan Hargreaves, TUC International Secretary. He is adamant that their International programme is non-political. (TUC photo)

A clue to what the British Committee may be about comes from Joe Godson's son, Roy. A director of the International Labour Programme, Georgetown University and a member of the NSIC he published a book in 1976 titled "American Labour and European Politics".[1] In it he wrote that because of the policy of detente with the Soviet Union the European and United States governments are unlikely to encourage anti-Communist AFL-CIO and European activities in Northern Europe, but appear willing to help trade unions leaders on both sides of the Atlantic get together to discuss matters of mutual interest. "If a transatlantic labour coalition develops, it would not be surprising if the Atlantic Governments facilitated and even co-operated in its work."

Godson added: "The German and United States governments reportedly are also concerned about the increasing influence of Moscow-orientated Communists in Southern Europe at least, and they might be expected to assist efforts to organise trade unions there. To the extent that they are willing to help finance trade union activities, they are likely to increase the effectiveness of a non governmental transatlantic coalition, although much will depend upon how this assistance is handled."

In July 1977 Treasurer Frank Chapple wrote to me to say it was sometime since he had attended meetings. He was out of touch.

When it comes to international work the great mass of the labour movement has been kept out of touch for years, and it's a global problem. International exchange between worker movements is pitifully small and in most cases non-existent. When this is combined with a lack of information from the leadership the effect is to drive labour movements into dangerous isolation making them vulnerable to outside manipulation.

On the morning after the 1977 TUC Conference international debate, for instance, Times Correspondent Fred Emery lamented "the TUC's extraordinary and selective world view". There was nothing discussed, he said, about Rhodesia and nothing about global north-south issues. Yet what kind of debate could there be if delegates aren't told what the TUC and ICFTU are up to in Rhodesia and elsewhere?

Rifling through TUC conference reports of the last decade it's clear that while delegates have pressed over South Africa, Vietnam or Chile there has been no time spent wondering about the direction of western trade union aid into these and other countries.

At the 1969 conference, Jim Mortimer then of the Draughtsmen and Allied Technicians Association (now AEUW TASS) said one item was missing from the international report, and talked about "detailed and specific revelations" of millions of pounds from the CIA under the cover of the international trade union movement. He said there were charges that some of the ICFTU officials were CIA agents.

TUC General Secretary George Woodcock said there was no evidence.

At the same conference a delegate from the National Union of Insurance Workers remitted a motion for TUC consideration calling on the trade union movement to do more toward the alleviation of world poverty and suggesting the Congress should invite affiliated unions to contribute toward a fund for this purpose.

It was rejected. At next year's conference Woodcock said trade union efforts were better directed towards assisting the growth of trade unions in developing countries "which would then themselves contribute toward an adequate and balanced social development".

Woodcock's answer was the starting point for this inquiry. I was to find reasons enough for wondering about the supposed connection between our present and past union to union connections and the removal of poverty.

### The poor

The poor are poor because they have no work, or only seasonal work. They starve, not because there isn't food, but because they can't afford to buy it or don't have the land on which to grow it. When they organise it's often enough to engage in brief and bloody acts of desperation.

The great majority are a million miles removed from present day western-orientated trade union solidarity. There are, for instance, more Indians destitute than total membership of the world trade union movements,\* and the great majority of the latter are in the rich heartlands of the northern hemisphere.

Balanced against that the increasing industrialisation of Third World countries creates the chance for strong and enduring worker movements. Increasingly too the struggle for trade union rights is recognised as a fight for everyone's rights with cases recorded in Nigeria and elsewhere of strong peasant support for worker struggles.

The organised poor for that same reason are often a first target for oppression. With few power blocs in Third World countries they represent a particular, but often isolated, threat to dictatorships. Just as in Hitler's Germany, it often means they are the first to be swept into oblivion or converted into puppets of the state.

With repression now masking much of the southern hemisphere the surviving worker and peasant movements are often forced to work underground looking to our western trade union movements not for cash but protection and solidarity.

Trying to discover how our trade union internationalism connects to these twin problems of poverty and need for solidarity help was to uncover a calamitous mess.

### Blocked off

Worker and peasant struggles are characterised by their dynamism and verve, often enough erupting when least expected. There is not a trace of any corresponding spontaneity or inventiveness within our international labour structures, just the opposite.

The ICFTU, for instance, is shackled by a constitution that means it can only work with and through national trade union centres, equivalent to our own TUC.

\*An estimated 250 million live below the official Indian poverty line. Optimum membership figures for the three world internationals is about 190 million.





George Woodcock. He said in 1969 there was no evidence of CIA involvement with the ICFTU. (Sport and General Press Agency/TUC Library)



The poor. When they organise, it is often enough to engage in brief and bloody acts of desperation.

Many of these centres in the Third World don't represent much more than the government and the few workers movements allowed to survive to present a democratic image and to make governments eligible for International Labour Organisation (ILO) technical aid funding. This problem is acute in Latin America. Recently, for instance, the ICFTU found that it had as the head of its affiliated Paraguay national centre none other than the country's Prime Minister. (The union has since been suspended.)

Many of these ICFTU affiliated centres are opposed by the genuine worker and peasant movements.

The implications rattle through the entire western trade union movement. These centres are not merely ICFTU affiliates, they also in turn become the affiliates of the TUC and the rest of the national trade union centres aligned to the ICFTU. It means often enough that the Western trade union movement is blocked off from reaching out through the official channels to make contact with the genuine worker and peasant movements.

The poor don't have the luxury of drawing neat distinctions between economic and political struggles. Too often when they try to organise, it's a state prison, bullet or bayonet that greets them. They know they're in a political fight.

Meanwhile the TUC and ICFTU echo the AFL-CIO line about support to free and independent unions saying about their work in the Third World that it's "non-political".

In most Third World countries, however, and indeed in most developed countries, union centres are aligned to political forces. In Jamaica, for instance, the rivalry between the two competing national trade union centres is the fount of the island's political life. How is it possible to aid one or the other of these centres without making a political choice?

This problem doesn't evaporate in the rare event of there being only one main workers' movement in a country. Increasingly, just as in the West, the unions find themselves dealing with the government as much as with the bosses. Inevitably conflicts escalate into a political confrontation like the 1973 British coalminers strike.

The now defunct Nigerian Trade Union Congress observed in 1965 about the ICFTU's talk of non-political trade unions: "It will be necessary for us to take note that in Great Britain the TUC takes part in active, partisan politics."

The TUC presumably would say that they created a separate political party but this is a useless dream for most Third World trade unions. A Chad national centre made the attempt a few years ago and was promptly smacked down by the government.

Former ICFTU General Secretary Harm Buijer conceded when speaking to a meeting of the Socialist International in 1971 that non-political trade unions in Africa were a rarity... "the involvement of the unions in the independence struggle meant that they developed a very high emotional awareness of the political as distinct from social and economic issues."

Constitutional and political problems snowball into one. In India, for instance, the three national trade union centres are all linked to different political forces. Taken together, however, they still represent only a tiny fraction of the

rural poor. Union drives to enrol the poor have largely failed. It's no accident. Too often the unions are about drawing the poor into political membership, and only rarely about helping them to overcome the cause of their poverty.

Following a rural membership drive by one of the main Sri Lanka unions, one of the leaders, Leonard Peries, resigned. He told me they were just manipulating the poor for their own purposes. (In recent years some of the Sri Lanka unions can rightly claim credit for successfully pressuring for a land distribution scheme to help the mainly Tamil minority group.)

The ICFTU attaches great importance to making its voice heard at United Nations level. At the same time it has to maintain a tricky balance between the views of its affiliates and its own secretariat. It condemned the rape of Bangladesh by Pakistan, for instance, and promptly lost its Pakistan affiliate.

More recently the ICFTU was called upon to condemn the barbarities of Idi Amin's regime. They refused, saying its own affiliate there was unaffected and, anyway, it had to keep sweet with the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

The ICFTU did rise to protest when the Greek Colonels came to power and arrested trade unionists. Then history twisted its tail as it has done so often and still does. The ICFTU learned that their own national centre affiliate there, the GSEE was busily reporting union "troublemakers" to the Colonels. It uncomfortably recalled the allies the British and Americans chose to work with in post-war Greece to oppose the popularly supported Communist unions.

The poor are often illiterate, dazed by hunger or harsh working conditions — so that they can barely comprehend how trade union internationalism impinges on their struggles, if at all.

Even where factory unions exist, one lot of workers is often isolated from the other. In many countries there is no equivalent to the British branch system. The overall picture is a fragmented, divided workforce that knows little enough sometimes even about its own trade union leadership, let alone the workings of the international trade union connections.

For many, the chance to organise around their workplace is denied them by management. Instead they have to depend upon a small outside professional secretariat made up of officers whose life-style is often closer to the bosses than the people they represent. Some of the secretariats can be easy meat for the types who infest international labour circles.

These conditions, however, provide a connecting rod between our own and the Third World labour force. For we've all been frozen out from international worker exchanges, and this problem has been compounded by the fragmentation and bureaucratisation of our own trade union movement.

The trade union press confirms this impression of isolation. The April 1976 issue of the AEUW TASS journal, for instance, carried a two-page spread on trade union internationalism. Somehow it managed to ignore altogether how it applied itself to the Third World. (The author, Gerry Pocock, was until recently, a representative of the WFTU.)

Brian Murphy, head of the TUC information department meanwhile says he can't recall one question at TUC press briefings about the TUC or ICFTU Third

World connections — “There’s been some questions about the Common Market and I think, in the past, about the AFL-CIO. But that’s about it.”

I decided first to check out the ICFTU’s Latin America connections. It’s a pointer for the future. Rapid industrialisation has brought about a third of the people in this area into the wage-earning sector. At the same time worker and peasant movements are facing massive repression in a continent where there are now only about three countries that have any claim to being democratic.

It would provide a good opportunity to see how our western trade union movement extends its solidarity, not just its cash.

#### Bibliography for Chapter 4.

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## Chapter 5

**“I’m sure the British trade union movement didn’t know what was being done with their money in Chile. They were completely ignorant otherwise I’m sure it would have been stopped . . . .”**

Sent packing to Latin America in the middle forties by Meany and Rockefeller, Serafine Romualdi, fresh out of the Office of Strategic Services, was soon busy trying to create a new right wing union bloc. By the end of the decade he had organised a Pan American federation, the Inter-American Regional Organisation of Workers (ORIT) adopted by the new ICFTU as its regional arm.

War on Want curiosity about ORIT was aroused through working with a Central America peasant league attempting land recovery actions. When the leadership was asked about ORIT their reply was unprintable. A War on Want worker complained, “For Christ sake, why doesn’t someone tell the British trade union movement about ORIT?”

British and European trade union leadership have channeled thousands of pounds into ORIT over the years. Other funding sources, according to Washington Post columnist Drew Pearson, include the CIA. [1] Ex-CIA agent Philip Agee has claimed that ORIT is the principle mechanism for CIA labour operations in Latin America. [2] Another ex-CIA operator who remains pro-agency, Joseph Smith, in his book “Portrait of a Cold Warrior,” [3] published in 1976 writes about meetings with the CIA officer assigned to look after ORIT and says ORIT “was one of the earlier efforts of Cord Meyer’s CIA international organisations’ divisions in Latin America”.

The TUC and ICFTU say there is no evidence to show CIA links with ORIT.

The actual amount of British and European trade union money ploughed into ORIT can’t be quantified. We can guess, however, it has been considerable by moving fifty miles from Mexico City to the State of Morelos where we find the former ORIT-ICFTU Inter-America labour college opened in 1966 at the height of the ICFTU “fat years”. It boasts forty four student rooms, classrooms, offices, library, lounge, restaurant, lecture theatre and swimming pool. The ICFTU contributed 180,000 dollars towards the building costs, the bulk from the Solidarity Fund. The costs, however, didn’t all come from the rich.

In 1964 the then ORIT General Secretary, Arturo Hurtado, said that a humble sugar worker from Trujillo, Peru, handed over a donation of ten soles (about seven pence). Said Hurtado: “He explained it was a sacrifice for him, but he and his wife agreed it was a necessary grain of sand for the cause of trade unions in Latin America.”\*

\*From “Reality of an ORIT dream”, ORIT publication to mark the opening of the college (TUC library).

Visitors to the college have remarked about the staff, among them a number of exiled Cubans. It recalls one of Romualdi's sorties and the way the western trade union movement officially cut off all links with Castro's Cuba.

Prior to the revolution Romualdi struck up a deal which would allow ORIT, and the ICFTU affiliate there, the Cuban Workers Federation (CTC) the right to exist and operate freely. In return the latter agreed to help neutralise the efforts of workers to overthrow the Batista dictatorship. Romualdi later tried to fix up a deal with Castro. After being criticised in the pro-Castro paper "Revolucion" Romualdi fled Cuba without meeting Castro. Batista's collaborators were thrown out of the CTC federation and it was placed in the hands of new leadership. A counter CTC organisation remains in exile in Florida still on the AFL-CIO mailing lists.

ORIT and the ICFTU cut off all links with the CTC after Romualdi's scramble from Cuba.

Supporting dictatorships and splitting left opposition movements was to become the principle ORIT role on the subcontinent. In Guatemala, in 1954, Jacob Arbenz, elected with large scale labour support, began a land reform programme that threatened the interests of the US United Fruit Company. When Romualdi tried to form a dual union to oppose the main workers federation he was thrown out amid accusations of foreign interference.

This convinced Meany that "the time had come to break the shackles of foreign interference". (Inter-American Bulletin, April, 1954)

Members of the unsuccessful dual union joined forces with a CIA directed army under Col. Carlo Castillo Armas which overthrew the Arbenz government. After the coup Romualdi was there helping to reorganise the unions. The United Fruit Company, meanwhile, was to go on to become a paying member of the AFL-CIO's Latin America labour programme.

One ORIT staffer from the US was to find another kind of fame — his effigy was burned in the streets of the Dominican Republic. Following the assassination in 1962 of General Trujillo, Andrew McLellan helped set up trade union organising work which had previously been banned.

He set himself up as adviser to the newly formed United Workers for Free Unions (FOUPSA). When its leader Miguel Soto was considering a general strike, it is alleged that McLellan offered him 30,000 dollars to call it off. Soto refused. The money was used instead to split off several unions from FOUPSA to form the dual union CONATRAL (Ronald Radosh "Labour and US policy").

CONATRAL was used to fight the "Communist" majority of the Dominican labour movement. It was also used to divide worker opposition to the military coup which finally overthrew President Juan Bosch. His successor, Cabral, outlawed strikes, fired military workers and jailed others.

Andrew McLellan now heads up the Latin America desk of the AFL-CIO.

ORIT currently claims about fifty affiliates. Harold Lewis, General Secretary of the International Transport Workers Federation (ITWF) told me that many of ORIT's affiliates have impressive sounding names, posh offices and hardly any members. His contempt for ORIT stretches to holding conferences in Mexico for his own affiliates and not bothering to invite ORIT officials to attend.

ORIT seems to operate freely in countries where there has been massive trade union repression like Brazil, Chile or the Argentine.

US labour researcher Rodney Larson explains: "The fact that ORIT was an AFL creation has meant that the AFL-CIO has always tended to dominate ORIT. This is easy to do because they have the money and a vast network in Latin America that simply overshadows the work of the ICFTU in this hemisphere."

TUC and ICFTU funding to ORIT continued even after a 1968 Senate Inquiry, defined ORIT's role as being mainly anti-Communist, and added — "ORIT endorsed the overthrow of the Arbenz regime in Guatemala and of the Goulart regime in Brazil. It supported Burnham over Cheddi Jagan in Guyana and it approved the US intervention in the Dominican Republic. To many Latin Americans this looks like ORIT is an instrument of the US." [5]

More correctly, they might have said an instrument of the CIA. This charge has been made repeatedly, and long before the Senate Inquiry, by ORIT's most persistent and bitter critic, the Confederation of Latin American Workers (CLAT), formerly the Latin American Confederation of Christian trade unions, regional wing of the smallest of the three world internationals, the Brussels based World Confederation of Labour (WCL). The WCL, like CLAT, declared itself totally non-denominational in 1968.

CLAT, with headquarters in Venezuela, arguably still mirrors the political pot-pourri that is the Catholic Church in Latin America, its official "radical and Socialist" line largely flowing from grass roots pressures which has shaken some of its traditional supporters, in Latin America, the Catholic hierarchy included (CLAT has accused some Latin American priests of knowingly and unknowingly using CIA funds).

CLAT's struggle with the AFL-CIO hierarchy and ORIT is the fiercest of any trade union battle taking place on the globe.

Meany has regularly denounced CLAT as Communist. AFL-CIO documents in my possession show that "social democrats" and Christian trade unionists are a number one target for the AFL-CIO in Latin America. The bitterness has spilled over on to the floor of the ICFTU Congresses. At the 1969 Congress J. Mercado (Workers Confederation of Colombia) warned: "The Communist Party together with other sectors of workers who call themselves Christians have banded together to finish off ORIT... We are now being called Fascists by this coalition of Communists and Christians... It is important that the ICFTU, in continuing its co-operation with the WCL (there have been numerous discussions in the past about the two combining) should realise that its affiliates in Latin America are adopting policies diametrically opposed to those here... we wish it to be known that ORIT is faced with planned suppression throughout the continent..."

Or from H. Banquero Caicedo, from the same union, speaking at the 1972 Congress about the "internal enemies" of Latin America — "the so-called Christians with a series of ideas, an intoxication of problems which no mineral war could make us capable of digesting." The same complaints have been made at world congress meetings of the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International (PTTI).

Study of the ICFTU reports blows apart repeated declarations that there is

no working link between ORIT and the American Institute for Free Labour Development (AIFLD) the independent AFL-CIO programme for Latin America, started in clear breach of AFL-CIO's promise to the ICFTU that they would refrain from going it alone. That link, I believe, can be shown right up to the years that saw the downfall of the Chilean government and implicates the leadership of the western trade union movements in the consequent killings, torture and imprisonment of thousands of workers and peasants.

### The AIFLD

H. Ter Heide, a Dutch delegate at the 1972 ICFTU Congress argued that there was a positive side to the AFL-CIO departure from the ICFTU: "We are no longer identified with some of the unhappy features of the AFL-CIO programme, especially with regard to developing countries. For example, the participation of some of the multinationals such as the United Fruit Company and the International Telephone and Telegraph Company (ITT) in the AIFLD makes this institute, in my view, unsuitable as an instrument for aiding free and democratic trade unions in developing countries."

Yet at the previous 1969 Congress delegates heard this from Panama, representative Mr. T. Yanguéz: "We who have been acting in concert with our regional organisation ORIT and know that every effort on the part of AIFLD is the subject of consultation with it, see that this co-operation exists."

There is abundant evidence to indicate a close link. The AIFLD helped to build and rented part of the ORIT labour college. The ORIT and AIFLD personnel mix closely. Romualdi moved from ORIT to help head up the AIFLD. Evidence of close working links also pepper ICFTU reports. The 1969 and 1972 ICFTU Congress show that they work together in the whole of Central America, in Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay, while there are references to the AIFLD giving ORIT financial help to pay for student fees.

Further proof comes from AIFLD reports. In its March 1970 ten year publication, "A Decade of Worker to Worker Co-operation", it reports that after training Latin American trade unionists at their Front Royal, Virginia, education centre "each student attends a three-day preparatory course on international labour at ORIT's study centre in Mexico."

A 1968 Senate Staff report into the workings of AIFLD revealed that "personnel sometimes moved back and forth between ORIT and AIFLD". An AIFLD spokesman said in 1977 "AIFLD has a close relationship with ORIT. The ORIT Secretary General frequently comes to Front Royal to talk to students. All the ORIT field representatives are in constant touch with AIFLD. ORIT is the more political, dealing with trade union rights, human rights, getting people out of jail. That's all they have time to do since there are so many people in jail."

Clinching evidence comes from a US Agency for International Development (AID) document dated August 1st, 1977, and in the possession of the authors. It says that AIFLD has asked AID to route 100,000 dollars to ORIT through an AIFLD/ORIT subcontract. It seems that the western hemispheric branch of the ICFTU, meant to be independent, is in fact a subcontract agent for AIFLD. This looks like

a breach of ICFTU policy regarding the independence of its regional wings.

So what is AIFLD? It was started in 1962 as a non-profit corporation. Its President is George Meany. Chairman of the Board of Trustees is millionaire J. Peter Grace, Chief Executive of W.R. Grace and Company, a multinational with huge holdings in Latin America. Ironically, when Grace joined, one of his companies, Airmold Products, was fighting against union recognition demands.

The board is made up of labour officials and business executives. Its stated aim is "the development of the democratic trade union movement in Latin America and the Caribbean." For a short time it was joined by Walter Reuther who then left complaining it was nothing to do with trade unionism. Said the newspaper *Latin America Political Report* (November 18, 1977) "No self respecting journalist in Latin America would refer to AIFLD without in the next breath making some reference to the CIA."

US AID papers show that the AIFLD is so powerfully connected that it can apparently overrule the wishes of US ambassadors in certain countries. A US AID briefing paper of May 19, 1977, reports that some embassies have raised policy objections to AIFLD's continuing support of a trade union movement willing to operate within government restraints, but says that no AIFLD country programmes have been stopped.

Declassified documents also in our possession clearly indicate that AIFLD field reports are routed through the CIA (e.g. End of tour report—Emilio Garza, Country Programme Director AIFLD, Lima, Peru, reference M.O. 326.3) Philip Agee has written that he worked with the AIFLD when a member of the CIA.

AIFLD's education and social projects are far in excess of anything the AFL-CIO provides for its own home membership. In Columbia and Peru, for instance, it has trained as much as five percent of all the union membership (see Appendix A). The most promising candidates (not all trade unionists) are offered a three month course in AIFLD's training centre at Front Royal, Virginia. When the course is completed trainees return home and remain on the payroll for at least another nine months.

Subjects covered at Front Royal include—The Inter-America and International Labour Movement, Adult Education, Instruction in Co-operatives, Time and Motion Study, Credit Unions, The Co-operative Movement: Techniques and Problems, The AIFLD Department of Social Projects, History and Structure of the North American Labour Movement, Political Systems: Democracy and Totalitarianism.

The last receives most attention. "Thank you for the brainwashing" one student wrote in the visitor's book.

One of the most controversial aspects of AIFLD's work is a housing programme for workers that adds up to the largest non-government programme on the continent. Unfortunately, the thousands of houses it constructs are often priced beyond the reach of average workers. Moreover, because of the strings attached it has been rejected by many unions.

The following is a selection from a questionnaire[6] used by AIFLD housing staff when interviewing candidates for housing.



### 1. Description of the Union

Here we are interested in knowing the potential of the union, its leaders, membership, orientation, organisation, effectiveness as a trade union entity, etc.

Political orientation (stated, known, suspected)

Political support (government, political and private groups)

Internal organisation of the union

Internal friction among leaders, between leaders and members.

### Biographical Information

Political and Ideological connections.

### Motivation and Outstanding traits

Is the person interested in power, prestige, influence, (stated, known, suspected)

What is his/her potential as a future leader?

Does the person accept guidance and orientation?

Did he/she show some interest in trade union education?

Despite having built 16,269 houses in twelve countries in the first ten years the 1968 Senate Inquiry spoke of "false promises" in their programme. The questionnaires were completed, but the houses did not materialise.

In 1973 an AIFLD report said that in that year alone the cost of their programmes amounted to forty three million dollars, that is about twenty times the entire overall budget for the ICFTU, Solidarity Fund included. So where does it all come from?

Certainly not from the US rank and file, the huge majority don't know the first thing about AIFLD. One source is the multinationals already listed. They are far from being the only source, however. William C. Doherty Jr., Executive Director of AIFLD, wrote in their 1972 Centenary Report that 92 percent of their budget comes from US government sources.

I decided to examine the AIFLD activities in Chile in the period preceding the junta's coming to power, and examine whether or not there was a link with ORIT.

### The Chile connection

A Senate Staff Report "Covert Action in CHile" published December 18 1975, contains the following:

"From 1964 through to 1968 the CIA developed contacts within the Chilean Socialist Party and at Cabinet level of the Chilean government.

"Projects aimed at organised groups in Chilean society had more diffuse purposes than efforts aimed at government institutions. But their aim was similar — influencing the direction of political events in Chile.

"Projects were directed, for example, towards:

"Wresting control of the Chilean university students organisations from the Communists;

"Supporting a women's group active in Chilean political and intellectual life;

"Combatting the Communist dominated Central Unia de Trabajadores

Chilenes (national trade union centre, CUT) and supporting democratic labour groups." (author's emphasis).

Later on, the same report says, "Two projects worked within organised labour. One, which began during the 1964 election period was a labour action to combat the Communist dominated CUT and support democratic labour groups. Another project was conducted in the Catholic labour field. The labour and Community development programmes were deemed rather unsuccessful in countering the growth of strong leftist sentiment and organisation among workers, peasants and slum dwellers. For instance, neither of the labour projects were able to find a nucleus of legitimate Chilean labour leaders to compete effectively with the Communist dominated CUT."

This evaluation followed the '65 and '69 elections.

Yet in Allende's famous last broadcast, punctuated by the noise of shellfire and within minutes of his own death he could be heard saying this: "Workers of my country, I want to thank you for the trust you have placed in a man who has only been a mouthpiece of the great aspiration of justice, who gave his



Chile before the coup and ragpicker Oscar Romero (left) explains — "We have voted for people who were rich, and they have done nothing. Now it is time to vote for people who are poor." (Camera Press)

promise . . . I am speaking to the members of the professions, those patriots who a few days ago were continuing to struggle against the revolution led by the professional unions. That is the class unions who were trying to hold on to the advantages granted to them by a capitalist society."

What happened in these intervening years up to the coup in 1973? AIFLD was blocked off from working with the majority of unions. Representing 80,000 workers in 1970 and two million by 1973 the CUT, although it had democratic elections and was not tied to any single party, was not considered by them to be free and democratic. They were left with only a few unions outside the CUT to work with, primarily the Maritime Workers Union (COMACH), an ORIT and ICFTU affiliate. Leaders of COMACH were among Romualdi's contacts.

AIFLD's first entrance into Chile is described in "Chile Invadido" by Eduardo Labarca Godard.[7] Executive Director, William Doherty Jr., led a delegation to Chile in 1962. He met with labour leaders in the Pan American Hotel and offered loans for co-operatives, housing and small impact programmes. Next came AIFLD people from lower down the rungs. Their object was to organise telephone workers away from the militant union of telephone employees and launch a campaign of wining and dining. Workers who refused their overtures and had influence suddenly found themselves fired. Doherty's people won the next election and former militant leaders no longer had jobs in the industry. (In 1967 the position was reversed and the militants won back control.)

Serafino Romualdi described the next gambit in his book "Presidents and Peons".[8] This was to employ the dual union tactics used in other countries. In the same year ALF-CIO representative Morris Paladino went to Chile and tried to make a deal with Jose Goldsack, a leader of the minority Christian Democratic faction within the CUT. Paladino proposed they try and split the CUT Convention. The tiny opposing National Confederation of Workers, of which the Maritime Workers were a part, was to demand admission to the Convention. If they were refused, it would signify a mass withdrawal by the Christian Democrats and Paladino would pay rent on a new hall and the first expenses for this new labour federation. The deal fell through.

Two ORIT and ICFTU connections are distinguishable here. First, the Maritime Workers; second, Paladino, for he was (ICFTU Congress Report) "at the ORIT Secretariat for quite a time as Director of Education and Assistant Secretary in charge of the organisation. Paladino was to become an Assistant General Secretary at the ICFTU (1966-1970)."

Cross-checking with the AIFLD Centenary Report we find that the Chilean Maritime Federation was "the major labour organisation with which AIFLD co-operates".

The ICFTU 1969 Congress report states that an ORIT labour studies centre had been established in Chile "to carry on educational activities with the assistance and co-operation of the AIFLD."

There is an interesting revelation in the AIFLD report of May 1970. Through one of its impact programmes it gave 5000 dollars to the Professional Employees Union of the Andes Mining Club. The cash was "needed to complete a vacation colony at Rodillo Beach" — help to a country club in a country where one in every ten children died before the age of five!

In fact, it reveals AIFLD tactics after failing to split the CUT. They had chosen to work with professional associations in a programme financed by some of the US multinationals in Chile like the ITT and Anaconda copper mines. The copper mines were to play an important part in the events that unfolded.

The AIFLD assisted the formation of the Confederation of Chilean Professions (CUPROCH) in May 1971. This started in the copper mines, but became an important and sinister national force when it supported a strike in October 1972 by the truck owners and merchants. It was undoubtedly CUPROCH that Allende was talking about in his final broadcast, for its influence — and treasury — was suddenly to become enormous. CUPROCH was behind the copper mine strikes which received world publicity and which served to promote the dissatisfaction the junta needed to justify the coup. Even so, the vast majority of copper mine workers remained loyal to the CUT and the government.

Time correspondent Rudolph Rausch interviewed some striking truckers near Santiago at mealtime. Despite serious shortages they were having "a lavish meal of steak, vegetables and empanadas". He asked where the money came from. They replied "From the CIA." (Time magazine, September 24, 1973).

Meanwhile the number of Chileans going to the AIFLD Front Royal Centre was rocketing. The AIFLD 1972 Centenary Report shows that 79 Chileans were graduates during the 10 year period. A memorandum from AIFLD's Washington office, dated 28 February 1973 lists 128 graduates, including 29 Chilean graduates in a six month span as opposed to 79 in the previous decade — among them Jorge Guerro, Secretary of the National Command for Gremio Defence who directed the strike of truck owners that crippled Allende's government.

Some observers have been struck by the similarity of events between the downfall of the Brazil government in 1964 and the fall of Allende. The 1968 Senate Inquiry into AIFLD revealed that Executive Director William Doherty had boasted about the 1964 coup: "What happened in Brazil did not just happen, it was planned, and months in advance. Many of the trade union leaders, some of whom were trained in our own institute, were involved."

In London I asked a Chilean in exile what ORIT had been doing in this period. He said that they flew about 200 trade unionists to the States for training before the coup. But this was part of the AIFLD programme and I thought it possible at the time, despite his claims to the contrary, that he was confused between the two.

I tracked down to the University of Guelph, Canada, an assistant professor of Political Studies, Jorge Nef. Nef was in Chile during this period and, moreover, was working on a comprehensive study of the political system in Chile, including an examination of the role of the unions.

I quote extracts of his letter to me. (April 5th, 1977): "Very rarely did ORIT have any rooting into truly blue collar unions [his definition of working class unions]. At best some inroads were made into marginal sindicatos, despite a very intense AIFLD financing.

"All the information I possess indicates that ORIT and AIFLD are only two sides of the same coin in Latin America despite formal allegations to the contrary. The same seems to be the case throughout the Caribbean, according to



my information, especially in Jamaica, Trinidad and Guyana. In countries outside Chile, however, ORIT-AIFLD seem to control unions which are genuinely blue collar with varying degrees of success. During the 60s in Chile the AIFLD office was also the headquarters of ORIT and was headed by a semi-official labour attaché of sorts of the US Embassy who had considerable influence in the Embassy and Consulate as I myself could find out."

Questioned about reports of ORIT flying trade unionists to the States prior to the coup he replied: "I have been aware of the courses you mentioned. It appears to me that they were the same courses at Front Royal offered by AIFLD. Rojas and Villenas, both leaders of the junta's labour gremios (right wing corporatist unions) were graduates of such courses."

"In sum, according to my sources, AIFLD is a promotion and active agency (with wide connections) and ORIT is a 'passive' organisational linkage. For all intents and purposes both work as part of a system of interactions."

Professor Nef believes members of the Maritime Workers Union,\* the ICFTU affiliate, helped lead the coup against Allende from the port of Valparaiso.



Street scene in Chile after the junta came to power. (ANS News Service/TUC Library)

\*The Maritime Workers Union was also an affiliate of the London based International Transport Workers Federation (ITWF). The link was severed when this federation failed to pay its affiliation fees. The ITWF admitted they were relieved the connection had ended.

Glasgow University lecturer Philip O'Brian was undertaking research work in Chile during this period. He told me, "ORIT and AIFLD worked together. I know, for instance, they were both active with the Maritime union. I know that some of the AIFLD personnel were formerly with ORIT. It was one of Allende's mistakes that he didn't get rid of them. I'm sure the British trade union movement didn't know what was being done with their money in Chile. They were completely ignorant otherwise I'm sure it would have been stopped."

I asked Allan Hargreaves what ORIT was doing in Chile before Allende's downfall. He said he didn't know.

An official in the ICFTU hierarchy told me "Whatever role ORIT played in Chile before Allende's downfall it could only have been a small one. Try to remember all the good we've done elsewhere."

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## Chapter 6

**"We're all doing God's work. They in their way, we in his"** Lane Kirkland, heir apparent to George Meany on the differences between the ICFTU and the AFL-CIO. The Economist, February 4th, 1978.

Confident they had tied up Latin America, the AFL-CIO tried to control Africa. This time the British gave them a fight.

In 1959 Tewson was seeking AFL-CIO assurances that they would not undermine the TUC's role there. The TUC felt they had proprietorial rights. Tewson told the TUC international committee that year: "In theory, practice and experience we know more about the sound development of African trade unions than either the ICFTU or Americans."

That experience had been gained through colonialism. It was to be turned against them in a wave of independence demands. Tewson complained that the Americans (mainly Irving Brown) were travelling around Africa dishonestly equating the TUC with British colonialism.

What they were not doing, he said, was honestly explaining to African unions that their real problems were disunity and lack of trained leadership.

He gave five reasons why the TUC would not abdicate in Africa —

1. We believe in trade unionism.
2. We believe trade unions can cut across racial, tribal and religious differences.
3. The handling of day to day trade union problems is not only essential for African workers, but the experience of this work is a vital training ground for handling the wider national problems which self-government will involve — "so often we have said to colleagues in these countries — 'If you can't run the trade union branch you cannot run the country.'"
4. Trade union organisation can contribute towards the economic stability which the first governments after independence must have if they are to carry out their promises to peoples.
5. In free and democratic determination of trade union problems, the trade union becomes a nursery of democratic practice.

A TUC internal document of this period said that the African unions were small and unable to command recognition. "Here and there, there are bodies of genuine trade union experience — for example, the European union in the Rhodesias, the railway, seaman's and some civil service unions in West Africa and the African miners' unions in Sierra Leone, Ghana and Northern Rhodesia. While these unions have from time to time had outside help, basically they have grown out of the industrial needs of the workers. They are not an artificial growth."

Slot this together with a report previously prepared by the ICFTU which spoke of financial dishonesty and "a predilection for politics on the part of many African trade union officials" and it becomes understandable why the TUC — in opposition to the Americans — wanted a low key financial approach.

There was no mention in the TUC document about the Kenya Federation of Labour. In the preceding six years, in the fifties, the Federation was believed to have received large scale funding from the AFL—CIO. Its leader, Tom Mboya, was a major force in Africa for the ICFTU helping to set up affiliated federations in Tanzania and Uganda.

At first it looked as though TUC policy might prevail. Largely through the British connection the ICFTU was to become strongly established on the continent. By 1960 when it launched its African Regional Organisation (AFRO) it had already taken away several fledgling unions from the WFTU and had affiliates in East Africa, Rhodesia, Cameroons, Gambia, Malagasy, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tunisia and Algeria.

With few hard core Communist unions around (there were a couple in French West Africa) it looked as though the ICFTU could water down its cold war stance. Within a few years, however, the ICFTU was just about through in Africa, and one cause was Pan-Africanism.

The labour movements of Guinea, Morocco, Ghana and Tunisia espousing the Pan Africa cause, and cheered on by the Communist WFTU who had few African affiliates and therefore little to lose, set up the All African Trade Union Federation (AATUF) committed to a policy of non-affiliation with the various world internationals. A decade later it gave way to the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) with headquarters in Ghana. The independence principle remained. The member unions have contact with all or none or some of the world internationals as it pleases them. The ICFTU thought at first they could survive this move. When the Zanzibar Federation in 1962 wrote a letter of disaffiliation to the ICFTU in line with the AATUF decision, General Secretary Omar Becu replied that the AATUF vote had been undemocratic. No body could decide for independent unions whom they should or should not affiliate with. Becu asserted that the number of ICFTU affiliates was still on the increase.

In fact they were rapidly to diminish, in part because governments also began to exert pressure on unions to disaffiliate from the ICFTU. Becu repeatedly complained it was unfair.

One trade union leader, however, told me that the underlying cause went deeper than the ICFTU complaint that African governments wanted unions isolated and therefore weakened.

"Zambia came to power trying to maintain a tricky tribal balance. Its economy was dominated by the coppermines and the workforce was organised. How could President Kaunda allow an outside body to have influence over the miners and therefore over a key part of the economy? Who was really in control of the ICFTU? Would you like the AFL-CIO to have control over the miners?"

At present some members of the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity would like to see all affiliates break links with the world internationals. Others, like the Sierra Leone Federation, want to see the right given to affiliate with the international of their choice.



Sir Vincent Tewson and Lady Tewson at the 1946 Brighton TUC conference. British opposition to the US overseas labour machine appeared to decline following his retirement and with it, some think, the TUC's formerly proud tradition in the international field. (Fox Photos/TUC Library)

Personal testimonies, however, have been given to Jean Bruck, former Secretary General of the World Confederation of Labour (WCL) and now labour adviser to the Common market, that prior to decisive votes on this issue the AFL-CIO has paid African trade union leaders to vote against any reaffiliation move. The charge is specific, detailing even the colour of the envelopes in which the money was passed over. It is outlined in a later part of this report. What is known is that the ICFTU has complained about "outside forces" at work. Labour researchers like Peter Waterman at the Institute of Social Studies in the Hague believe that it suits US interests to keep things as they are because they can more easily influence unions through bilateral relations.

If the AFL-CIO and State Department have been trying to make space for themselves in Africa, at the expense of the ICFTU, there is no question that they have succeeded. Apart from Tunisia, the ICFTU now has no major affiliate left in Africa and is isolated in pockets of Southern Africa.

### Tying up Africa

The AFL-CIO on the other hand is firmly ensconced in the great majority of African countries. US dominance represents one irony after the other for the ICFTU. The ICFTU has been tarnished with the CIA label. Numerous countries have closed their doors to it, yet the AFL-CIO is apparently able to glide with consummate ease through these countries like Tanzania and Malawi. What they've got behind them is cash, the State Department and a way of organising trade unions that appeals to governments not noted for their affection towards workers' movements.

It revolves around the second independent programme started while still members of the ICFTU, the Africa-America Centre (AALC). It opened up in 1964 when Meany and Lovestone decided to let Irving Brown take care of Africa for them.

This time there was no pretence — as with ORIT — of putting a national in charge. From its beginnings the AALC was headed up by Brown who ran it out of a New York office while Meany was declared President. Everything the Americans learned from their AIFLD Latin American operation was employed.

Joseph Beirne, former head of the Communication Workers of America (CWA), nominal founder of the AIFLD apparatus, was appointed Secretary Treasurer to the AALC (after his death his successor admitted to some European trade union leaders that Beirne had been handling "other than trade union" cash).

In 1965 Brown reported that the AALC would "rely on the services of consultants including technicians and other interested management people who have knowledge of specific areas of Africa."

In 1973 Brown was sent back to Paris to head up the AFL-CIO European office and particularly to keep an eye on the Spanish and Portuguese unions. His Africa successor is ex-Marine Patrick O'Farrell.

The scale of the US labour operations in Africa explains why they can easily

## AFRICAN AMERICAN LABOR CENTER, INC.

### Project Activities Expenses January 1, 1975 through December 31, 1975

Project No.		Actual \$	Budget \$
1.	Home Office Support	734,083	724,440
2.	Impact Activities	241,053	250,000
3.	Trade Union Institute — Nigeria	166,707	196,596
6.	Labor Education — Zaire	176,460	176,006
9.	International Trade Unions	139,147	163,534
10.	Labor Education & Development — Ethiopia	4,121	25,200
11.	Pan-African Cooperative Training — Dahomey	9,342	15,000
12.	Regional Tailoring Institute — Senegal	82,514	84,287
13.	Asmara Vocational Training — Ethiopia	5,787	14,030
15.	Trade Union Education — Botswana	55,092	61,275
16.	Labor Education — Kenya	87,745	89,967
18.	Pan-African Communications	1,906	5,000
19.	Regional Economic Research — Togo	132,386	110,083
21.	Labor Education — Malawi	12,876	10,000
22.	Regional Credit Union Development — East Africa	80,544	94,030
23.	Research & Documentation Center — English Regional	10,026	5,000
24.	Research, Administration & Publication Project — Ethiopia	42,011	76,214
25.	Vocational Training Project — Botswana	22,551	48,712
26.	Labor Education Project — Lesotho	13,172	21,250
27.	Workers Education Project — Sierra Leone	28,957	36,368
Totals		\$2,046,480	2,206,992



A member of the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) which, like many other minority groups, is trapped between the power politics of the East and West, with the Russians joining the Ethiopians to try and crush this liberation movement whose cause they had previously supported in principle. The result is that all appeals for solidarity to the world trade union movements by the Eritrean Workers Association has gone unheeded. The Eritreans, charge that both the Western and Eastern blocs, through their respective trade union internationals, served to divide the Ethiopian trade union federation (CELU), weakening the possibility of solidarity between Eritrean and Ethiopian workers. (Mike Wells/Eritrean Relief Association)

brush aside the ICFTU and it is all the more striking when balanced against the still relatively small size of the union movement there.

Run out of a New York office where there were 14 staff according to 1976 figures, this mushrooms out to a total of 134 when the Africa personnel are included. Figures from their 1973 ten year report and subsequent annual budget proposals indicate a rapid expansion of their programme. The US AID contribution alone in 1976 amounted to 2,250,000 dollars. Most Congressmen are unaware of this. Many have never heard of the AALC.

A torrent of labour leadership programmes, material assistance, literature and equipment followed the founding of the AALC. One of the main thrusts has been the creation of labour colleges for vocational and leadership training. In addition hundreds of African trade unionists have been flown to the US for training. The AALC is also developing a corps of labour aristocrats. Harvard University and other Ivy League colleges have trained scores of African trade unionists. The Americans have built a number of union headquarters for national centres as in Ethiopia.

These programmes are reinforced by a host of research and documentation centres. "Facts about employers and local union membership" are tabulated at the centres. There are also extensive communication centres such as the Pan Africa Trade Union Information Centre in Zaire and the Trade Union Institute for Economic and Social Development in Nigeria.

More directly, co-operative credit and consumer unions are used to expand the economic assets of selected African unions. These can be found in Kenya, Zambia, Ethiopia (before 1977), Mauritania, Niger and Malagasy. Over two million dollars in loans have been doled out. The AALC previously worked with the Israeli-Afro-Asian Labour Institute. This link dissolved in 1969 following Israeli worries about alleged CIA funding of the AFL-CIO overseas programmes.\*

The extent of the AALC programme can be illustrated by the breadth of its contacts in one country — Ethiopia. Workers and union officers were brought to the US for expensive "training" in the late sixties and seventies. Over 1000 members of the Ethiopian labour federation (CELU) participated in lengthy seminars and an estimated 70,000 families were reached by audio-visual programmes. This sample could be duplicated in dozens of countries. However, when 120,000 members of CELU affiliates went on general strike for four days in 1974 for an increase in the minimum daily wage and when the President of CELU, Beyene Solomon and the General Secretary, Fisseha Tsion Tekie were arrested, it was the ICFTU that intervened on their behalf and not the AALC or AFL-CIO.

The AALC programme in Ethiopia began under the repressive regime and with the express permission of Emperor Haile Selassie. In the early seventies Ethiopian students alleged that some of the CELU leadership, frequent visitors to the US, were receiving secret funding.

A Scandinavian top trade union official told me: "The Americans are travelling around offering money independently to trade union leaders. That way

\*New York Times, August 11, 1975.

of buying friends, goodwill and agents must be directed to the upper structure of the national unions as the goals are mainly political.

"It is obvious that the AFL-CIO doesn't consider trade union assistance from the point of view of giving a hand to the common worker but as part of US foreign policy. They don't give a damn about the common workers' situation, as you can easily see from their training programmes. They are always geared to trade union leadership (his emphasis) training. But if you never train the rank and file members how will they defend their rights, especially against dishonest leadership which is often their worst problem?

"And how do you get sound trade unions if you continuously economically maintain the upper strata of the unions — and maintain them very well by pouring in 'education' money but don't care about rank and file members, if there are any?"

During the course of this inquiry a 1973 AALC paper was unearthed. It was an evaluation of the Africa work of the Denver based International Federation of Petroleum and Chemical Workers (IFPCW) undertaken by Joseph Mintzes of US AID and Lester Tractman of the AALC. The report recommends greater AALC funding of the IFPCW. The IFPCW has since been exposed by Victor Reuther, among others, of not merely accepting CIA money, but of allegedly being set up by the CIA. It is now defunct. The paper puts to the credit of the IFPCW the fact that its Africa work has been praised by company officials.

### The ICFTU response

A key question is where the ICFTU fits into all of this. Officials quietly murmur that their Latin America connections are an embarrassment but, in theory, there should be no similar problem in Africa where there is no equivalent of ORIT to work through. It gives the ICFTU the chance to exercise its own values, particularly since the AFL-CIO departure from their ranks.

With no centralised regional wing, tracing the ICFTU African activities is difficult. Congress reports published every three years (now to be every four) don't list who receives their money or why, but country reports indicate some likely recipients.

ICFTU Congress reports, for instance, make it clear that up to the early seventies they were still funding a Mauritius affiliate with the express intention of blocking the advances of what they called a "Marxist-led" rival.

More recently — and more revealingly — the ICFTU reported they were funding the Angolan General League of Workers during the Angolan liberation war. This body was operating out of Zaire. I put it to two top ICFTU officials, and they unhesitatingly agreed, that it was a "front" (my word) for the US backed FNLA forces.

There are reports that the ICFTU has since tried and failed to establish links with the now single Angola National Union Centre (UNTA).\*

\*The German DGB complained about an ICFTU presence at a 1977 Pan Africa Conference where no ICFTU related unions were present. It is thought that it was, in part, an ICFTU effort to establish links in the former Portuguese colonies.

Meanwhile P.F. Sithole, a Bulawayo trade unionist writing in the Rhodesian Herald of October 22, 1973, has this to say: "Regrettably indiscriminate financial handouts to individual trade union leaders outside the control of their unions by the ICFTU in Rhodesia are reasons for dividing and retarding the growth of the African Labour movement... It is appalling to watch African trade union leaders being tossed around from one union to another by international aid without providing any meaningful trade union representation to African workers, cancelling out any economic industrial power that could be developed to improve the economic position of black workers."

Bill Lawrence, who formerly worked with the Public Services International (PSI) represented both the ICFTU and the ITSs in Rhodesia in the sixties and early seventies. He has since left the country.

Rob Davies, of the Department of Economics, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, in a detailed article which appeared in South Africa Labour Bulletin, March 1975, appears to sustain Sithole's suspicions.

He found, for instance, that Lawrence had given money to individual trade union leaders. He cites as an example payments to P.J. Mpofu, General Secretary of the Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union.

When Mpofu was detained in 1973 assistance to his union ended because, says Davies, there was no ICFTU contact with other union officials.

Davies says: "It is obvious that if aid is given in this way it is a bad thing and does nothing to promote the development of unions."

He continues: "It is difficult to get evidence that this is the way the ICFTU has normally been operating in Zimbabwe." He says Lawrence denies it, arguing that all distributed cash is disclosed in union accounts. "While this may be true it would not cover monies given direct to individuals" says Davies.

He reveals that the African Trade Union Congress (ATUC) had, on a number of occasions, requested the ICFTU to send out a team to investigate Lawrence's work.

Speaking about ATUC charges that the ICFTU was weakening the black labour movement, Davies draws up a picture of Lawrence coming to Rhodesia to try and get the two opposing union centres, each aligned to different wings of the liberation struggle, to settle their differences and merge. He failed to do so. To show his time has not been wasted he has to come up with something. He can only get a merger if Sithole, leader of the ATUC and critical of international aid, is out of the way.

He can only be removed if his support is removed. Lawrence's behind-the-scene work, suggests Davies, was to get a third centre started, the National African Trades Union Congress (NATUC).

Davies thinks there are few ideological differences between ATUC and NATUC — "indeed some observers believe that the present split is caused either over the question of aid or by the operation of aid agencies in Rhodesia, particularly the ICFTU."

Meanwhile ATUC is still fighting the same battle. The ICFTU has deserted Zimbabwe. The US has moved in. In late 1977 a new body, the Zimbabwe Federation of Labour, was started and ATUC complained: "We have been



advised that the AFL-CIO is attempting to disrupt the existing trade unions so that it may impose another centre which will be used to fight for, or against, foreign ideologies rather than represent the interests of the African workers." (Rhodesia Financial Gazette, 18th November 1977)

Both the TUC and ICFTU refused to speak about their recent past work in Zimbabwe. The head of an international trade secretariat told me, however, that Lawrence had been placed in an impossible position and should have been recalled earlier because of difficulties and confusions between the different trade union blocks. He made no comment when I suggested that confusion was inevitable if the ICFTU itself had hazy objectives, particularly when it pitchforked itself into a civil war situation.

### "Treachery and betrayal" in Nigeria

The most chilling evidence, however, that something has gone badly wrong has surfaced in Nigeria. This time the documentation is comprehensive.

Both the ICFTU and the AALC supported the United Labour Congress of Nigeria (ULCN) regarded as the main counterbalance to the rival Communist led Nigeria Trade Union Congress (NTUC). From a 1977 report<sup>[1]</sup> of a government tribunal of inquiry into the activities of the trade unions, the following emerged:

1. So considerable was the ICFTU and US funding to the ULCN that most of the centre's affiliates didn't bother to pay dues to it. Leadership of unions which did pay expected in return financial and other rewards. Money was used to try and bribe union leaders to affiliate their unions with the UNLC.
2. The President of the ULCN had information that the AALC was connected with the CIA. He wrote to two of the AALC staff in Nigeria asking for an explanation. None was forthcoming.
3. In the early seventies the ICFTU paid out money for UNLC-run welfare schemes. The inquiry reported: "The projects were established, but with (one) exception they were allowed to fizzle out largely because of lack of supervision of the personnel directly responsible for their operation by the Congress Secretariat. No member of the Congress Secretariat could tell us what had become of the projects — they just did not know. This led us to conclude that they had adopted a carefree attitude to the projects because the funding went through external sources."
4. In 1973 the ULCN was able to get an additional 10,000 dollars from the ICFTU by pretending it was about to launch an organisational campaign. The inquiry said it "was a specious cover to induce the ICFTU to part with its money."
5. The ICFTU (which prides itself on a non-colonial relationship with affiliated Third World unions) along with the AALC "had a free hand in the running of the affairs of the Congress." Representatives of both took part in policy making meetings.
6. The inquiry found that because of the flow of money and material aid

from the ICFTU and the US "there appeared to be a tacit understanding among the officers of Congress of adopting a policy of "what you have you hold". The result was that each officer kept to himself/herself what came to him/her be it money, car or scooter and provided he acknowledged receipt of it to the donating organisation, that virtually ended the matter."

It was also the case that the inquiry found equally bizarre and corrupting relations between the WFTU related Nigeria Trade Union Congress and Eastern Europe.

The inquiry and the background to it provided some shattering evidence of how the Western and Eastern blocs were using the local unions for their own political purposes. One of the union leaders to survive the inquiry with his reputation unscathed, and some think enhanced, was Alhaji H.P. Adebola of the National Portworkers Association (NPA) and former leader of the ULCN.

Peter Waterman, of the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, is currently undertaking a study of the Nigerian port workers. He has given permission for the following extracts to be reprinted in this report.

Waterman describes Adebola beginning as a nationalist in the 1940s, and then developing in the 1950s as strongly pro-Western and anti-Communist. Asked by Waterman whether he had ever in the past exploited anti-Communism to recruit into his own union fold, Adebola replies, "Oh, to be candid, after taking oath on the Holy Koran, God forbid that I should tell lie here. We used it, that there are Communist trade unions and Nigeria was not prepared for Communism and we don't believe in Communist trade union movement."

Waterman says Adebola associated intimately with the western trade unions during the 1950s and 1960s. But in 1969, becoming aware, says Waterman, of CIA involvement in the overseas work of the US unions he became as bitterly opposed to them as he had been to the Communists.

"I formed the impression that some of the officials of the foreign trade unions in Nigeria had something to do with the CIA of America . . . Since the advent of the Africa-America Labour Centre in Nigeria . . . treachery and betrayal has found a comfortable asylum in the Nigerian trade union movement." (Adebola Memorandum, March 22, 1976)

Waterman says the clash with the Americans seems to have meant that Adebola lost his leadership of the United Labour Congress of Nigeria to American-backed unionists. In later denouncing a US trade union representative to government, Adebola declared himself to be acting as a "loyal, reasonable and patriotic" Nigerian.

Other extracts show how the external aid ripped apart even unions within the ICFTU-US orbit. One union leader, for instance, attended a seminar on labour journalism organised by the AFL-CIO and US AID. It enabled him to meet Gleason, President of the International Longshoremen's Association and obtain from him the offer of a car for his union. The Nigerian union leader had only to obtain the approval of Irving Brown.

At this point the United Labour Congress of Nigeria (ULCN) protested that this arrangement violated an agreement that all aid be channelled through the



ULCN. The upshot was a row between the recipient union and the ULCN with the worry that the recipient union might even disaffiliate from the ULCN.

Waterman's study again reveals how the rank and file had no idea about what was going on inside "their" international programmes. He writes that about half the portworkers "had no idea about any possible brothers-in-arms anywhere else in the world."

Said Waterman: "It would appear as if working class internationalism is in the National Portworkers Association case more a relationship between moderate western trade union organisations and top union leadership than anything of a broader nature."

The Nigerian Government has since created a new united national centre, the others being disbanded. TUC International Committee minutes of May 1977 show that the ICFTU was complaining about Nigerian government "interference" in the affairs of the unions.

The Nigerian inquiry was the spark that finally got one TUC official talking. With it came a further insight into the cloudy relationship between the TUC and ICFTU. The official complained: "The TUC probably spent more time trying to help the Nigerian trade unions than any other in the Third World. We tried hard to develop the unions by working at a local level. You see what is happening, the ICFTU is working at a political level. Apart from anything else it's wasting money."

Asked why the TUC wasn't exerting pressure from inside the ICFTU to get things changed he said: "It's difficult. We're no longer a major subscriber."

He conceded that a main reason why the TUC decided two years ago no longer to contribute to the ICFTU Solidarity Fund (although still priming ICFTU running costs) was unhappiness over spending policy. When I said it seemed almost impossible for ordinary workers to understand from ICFTU reports where the money was going, or why, he said: "You're not the only one with that problem. The TUC doesn't know how the money is being used. We've pressed more than any other affiliate for the ICFTU to provide details." (A TUC General Council member later made the same point).

### South Africa

It now looks as though the AFL-CIO is going to underline its hegemony by opening up in South Africa, the one country they had shied clear of.

Although strongly represented in all the surrounding countries, Jerry Funk, Deputy Executive Director of the AALC, has said US trade unionists feel unable to support the idea of separate but equal trade unionism in South Africa. This policy has come under increasing US criticisms on the grounds that the TUC and other western nationals feel no such inhibitions.

A number of South African black trade union leaders attended the 1977 AFL-CIO Convention (indeed they and others have been increasingly frequent visitors to the West with the Foreign Office and Ariel Foundation in Britain, for instance, bringing some over). Some labour observers believe the US will open up South Africa labour programmes by operating, at least at first, through the international trade secretariats (ITSs).

Significantly, and unlike the previous year, the AFL-CIO gave support to the ICFTU 1978 call for a week of protest action over South Africa. South Africa is one of the few countries left on the continent where the ICFTU appears to have a visible presence, supporting two of the black labour education centres that sprung up in the wake of the industrial troubles in Durban in 1973 and which is dealt with later in this report.

ICFTU General Secretary Otto Kersten, appealing for a US recall to the ICFTU, has argued that there are no ideological differences between the two. From what can be gleaned from the ICFTU Africa programme that appears true, but that simple assertion does less than justice to the problem.

Within and without the ICFTU there are trade union officials who loathe the US labour work and within the numerous existing constraints are trying to operate a decent trade union programme. ICFTU organising advice to Africa unions, for instance, is valuable and welcomed.

For all that, however, the ICFTU appears unable to rise above its anti-Communist history and put forward a positive programme for social justice. One possible cause was hinted at by Dutch delegate H. Ter Heide at the 1972 ICFTU Congress.

"The AFL-CIO deliberately and freely left this organisation. If they want to have any influence in this organisation then I would be the first to welcome them when they decide to come back. However, as long as they prefer not to come back I think it would be a serious failure on the part of this organisation to allow itself to be influenced when deciding its policies by the fear that the AFL-CIO might or might not like them."

Meanwhile Dennis Akuma, Secretary General of the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) meeting with me in London in June, 1978, gave me an insight into what it feels like to be on the receiving end of the overtures and cash from the various trade unions in the northern hemisphere.

He told me he and his organisation were on a tightrope. Various efforts had been made by "external forces," to subvert its influence and policies. The OATUU with a total of 64 national affiliates had been making efforts to tighten its organisation to resist these pressures. One example was that foreign trade union forces were no longer allowed to convene meetings with two or more of their national affiliates without there being a representative of the OATUU present. Despite these and other precautions he agreed they were still in a tricky situation. He acknowledged that some African trade union officials had been used to try and influence OATUU policies.

He said various foreign government agents were at work using machinery of international trade union aid and he argued that there had to be a programme of "real trade union international solidarity started, run by real trade unionists."

### Santa Clause comes to Asia

A member of the Miners International Federation (MIF) tells us how after a pit disaster in India a few years ago his international sent cash aid to the widows.

He was shocked to learn that unscrupulous traders had moved into the area selling them cheap junk to relieve them of the cash.

They managed, he said, to put a stop to it. But the helpless wave of his arm eloquently described the frustrations of being locked into a system of Western industrial solidarity that has little relevance for the wretched and dispossessed.

In Asia this problem is acute and industrial orientated trade union internationalism especially dangerous. According to its critics — and in Asia they are increasingly numerous — it furthers the interests of a relatively small minority helping to divide joint organised struggle between workers and peasants.

When you add to this the spread of dictatorships from South Korea to Indonesia and in turn the ICFTUs link with national centres approved by these same regimes, then the Asian experience vividly demonstrates the paralysing irrelevance of many of these structures.

When Mrs. Gandhi's regime, for instance, imprisoned hundreds of trade unionists the Congress Party related India National Trade Union Centre, affiliated to the ICFTU, told the Brussels headquarters to lay off making protests. They said it was only a temporary phenomena. The result was that appeals by the victims for a worldwide show of trade union solidarity went unheeded. The TUC, for instance, was reduced to filing a complaint through the Foreign and Commonwealth office (FCO).

It should be said that the ICFTU did try and send a delegation to India to investigate the arrests, but it was blocked by the Indian government. Indian critics point out that by contrast the WFTU did not bother to do anything. Since this period there has been a growth of trade union movements independent of the major world trade union internationals.

The same pattern unfolds elsewhere. In South Korea thousands of workers have been incarcerated or thrown out of their jobs. Many are now meeting at night in the slums of Seoul trying to establish the framework of organisations.

A TUC official conceded that because the ICFTU was related to a national centre "which barely existed in reality,"\* it was impossible to connect with these workers.

To understand the politics and problems confronting the official ICFTU channels means coming to grips with the politics of Singapore, centrifugal centre of the ICFTU's Asia Regional Organisation (ARO).

Because Singapore has become an enclave of rapid industrialisation, creating in turn a relatively high and unionised work force, it has given substantial power to the Singapore National Trade Union Congress (NTUC) and its head, C.V. Devan Nair. Nair is a prominent influence in both the ICFTU and ARO.

Said a TUC official: "Nair puts forward Singapore as a guide to the rest of the developing world." He added: "It isn't my idea of freedom and independence."

\*This presumably is a reference to the Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU) created by the US in the late 40s. In fact its membership is around the two million mark. It is likely that while it does indeed exist, and in some strength, the TUC believes it is dominated by the government and US financing. The Summer 1978 edition of AMPO (Japan-Asia quarterly review) was reporting that the FKTU were hiring outsiders to break up union organising in the textile mills. Some assaulted the women workers.

Nair's anxiety for rapid industrial development has put him at odds with what he sees as the protectionist sentiments of the AFL-CIO.

Returning from one AFL-CIO conference he thundered; "There was a lot of bleeding heart talk about the poor American workers. Our retort is simple. Our heart will begin to bleed for the American workers when his plight becomes even as bad as that of the countless millions in Asia who suffer the squalor, poverty and deprivation arising from lack of development." [2]

It will be argued later in this report that irrespective of the AFL-CIOs protectionist lobbying at home, they are in fact helping to serve the interests of the multinationals and that an analysis of the direction and timing of their overseas programme will sustain this argument. More to the point, however, is that whatever ARO's rows with the AFL-CIO on movement of capital, there are few ideological differences.

In 1968 the AFL-CIO opened up its third independent programme, the America-Asia Free Labour Institute (AAFLI). It has a familiar name as Executive Director, Morris Paladino formerly of ORIT and the ICFTU where he served as assistant General Secretary.



Industrial relations experts from affiliates of the Singapore National Trades Union Congress meeting with Morris Paladino at AAFLI headquarters in Washington.

#### Vietnam

AAFLI was in part a response to the Vietnam war. Its first regional office was opened in Saigon. Others followed in Manila (forced out for a while for interference in internal affairs), Indonesia, Bangkok, Jakarta and Seoul. Country offices opened elsewhere. A War on Want worker in Bangladesh, for instance, found it shares the US AID office. Labour researcher Lenny Siegal says: "AAFLI undoubtedly serves the CIA." [3]

Right from the start the western trade union movement was embroiled in this US activity. When the trade union movements throughout Europe were protesting about US involvement in Vietnam the ICFTU — presumably after consultation with ARO — advised its affiliates to work with the Vietnamese Confederation of Labour (CVT). Whatever it was, it was too much for the TUC. According to internal sources this request was quickly ignored (the TUC went on to give money to the Red Cross in both North and South Vietnam).

What is known is that the CVT was formerly an affiliate of the smallest of the three world internationals, the World Confederation of Labour (WCL) but had been largely taken over by the US.

As soon as AAFLI got going it linked with the Tran Quoc Buu, head of the CVT. It immediately contributed 35,000 dollars — about one third through the aid agency CARE — to the CVT. Through 1975 AAFLI received about 850,000 dollars for Vietnam work through US AID.

Here's how two Japanese journalists and researchers, Muto I Chiyo and Matsuo Kei describe this Vietnam work.[4]

"As soon as it was established, AAFLI chose Saigon as its first bastion in Asia. Just at that time AID was promoting its pacification programme and the CIA the phoenix operation (assassination of liberation force leaders). On the union level AAFLI co-operated with the CVT headed by Tran Quoc Buu. Closely collaborating with AID, Meany's AAFLI extended its activities into rural areas spending lavishly to lubricate their pacification programme. Buu and the CTV were the labour functionaries of the Thieu regime and the US government and the CNV purpose was to effectively break worker strikes and resistance. AAFLI's last action was at least symbolic. It got military helicopters sent in to pick up Mr. Buu himself and forty other CTV officers..."

Japanese interest has been stimulated because of close working links that have been forged in the aftermath of the Vietnam war between AAFLI and the Japanese Confederation of Labour (DOMEI), an ICFTU affiliate.

Meanwhile there is a growing glut of money available for top right wing Asian trade union leaders. A War on Want worker reports from Sri Lanka that the Ceylon Workers Congress, an ICFTU affiliate and main union for the tea plantation workers, now sees itself able to dodge between the ICFTU and AAFLI for cash. There are also reports of extensive AAFLI work in the Philippines and that a farmers' union it has worked with has become "very right wing."

The Asian officer of one ITS told me: "AAFLI's like Santa Claus. The real trade unionists who want popularly based movements hate AAFLI. We have a saying here — where AAFLI goes, the grass don't grow."

He told me that when an AAFLI representative invited him to a Taiwan seminar he wrote to his boss seeking advice. He was told to ignore it: AAFLI was CIA. He passed on the message to the AAFLI representative. She wrote back a furious reply — the stamp on the envelope was available only to US military personnel!

He added, "Largely because of the Americans what is happening in Asian labour is not a struggle over principle, but differences over money."

The story of the ICFTU in Asia, meanwhile, seems to be the story of an

organisation going broke. It wasn't so long ago, for instance, that the ICFTU trade union education workcamps outside Poona in India were an impressive and familiar sight. Today they are scratching around for money to support a village development scheme.\*

At first sight it might seem to be an answer to critics saying that they're not getting down to tackling the cause of poverty at grass roots level. The ICFTU seems to be making considerable play out of the project to show they are visibly doing so and indeed has since tried to open up a similar scheme in Thailand (one TUC General Council member has asked if this would not be seen as supporting the military government there — TUC international committee minutes).

A British trade union visitor to India reports, however: "The amazing thing is that between these national centre affiliates of the ICFTU and the rural development scheme there are really some excellent worker movements trying to organise the poor but because they're not recognised by the national centres they have to struggle along as best they can."

A member of the National Labour Institute in New Delhi writes: "The ICFTU does not have too much of a reputation in India. Its linkage with international status quo-ism is too well known. Even their rural programmes in India are more showy than real. Working at grass-roots level has not been easy for them. Perhaps not more than ten per cent of the total workforce in India is unionised and while major trade union federations may not be short of money the grass root trade unionists and organisations or industrial and rural labour are constantly in want."

There is a revealing passage in the notes of an ICFTU review committee of June, 1977. Because ARO is expanding its activities and seeking more money there were fears that ARO "might engage in projects financed by the AFL-CIO." A TUC representative (unnamed) is quoted as saying there "were bound to be suspicions about the eventual source of these extra-budgetary funds."

It is clear with this revelation that what we're dealing with is well enough known to the TUC hierarchy, despite their seeking an AFL-CIO recall to the ICFTU.

Latin American workers, who have suffered most at the hands of Meany's machine, and the stuttering support given it by European labour, talk about "Imperialismo de Los Sindicatos" — trade union imperialism. They laugh uproariously at the thought that trade union aid can be non-political and insist that any aid-giving organisation creates overseas in its own image. They call on us to examine the bureaucracy of our own trade union movement.

Nor should we be surprised if they sometimes find it hard to discriminate between the TUC and Meany's camp. The AFL-CIO Free Trade Union Newspaper, for instance, does carry British labour views — of a kind. The December 1976 issue carried a two-page spread about multinationals. The author was Labour M.P. Alan Lee Williams of the British Labour Committee for Trans-Atlantic Understanding. He was contrasting proposed legislation to curb multinationals "with the Soviet propaganda concentration, supported by international front organisations."

\*Organisation of the Rural Poor project, Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh.

You can be sure, like the material they have received from IRIS, that it was widely distributed. You can also be sure that it will only be labour leaders and other dignitaries who will be asked to join this committee. That seems to be the story of worker internationalism everywhere.

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## Chapter 7

### The "kept" unions.

In 1962 a member of one of America's most illustrious families, George Cabot, attached to the US Department of Labour, wrote a scholarly work for the Council on Foreign Relations, the inner circle of the US intelligence elite. It was titled "Spearheads of Democracy: Labour and the Developing Countries."<sup>[1]</sup> Its theme is summed up in this extract.

"We are involved in a total war. It cannot be won easily or cheaply. In fact it cannot be won without the total mobilisation of all our resources and the sharp focus of these resources upon the priorities which the national interest may set . . .

"This book is a plea to governments, management and labour to perceive more precisely than they have the importance of organisations of workers in the developing world to the fulfilment of US foreign policy and the objectives of the free world. To paraphrase . . . foreign policy is not 'something left over' after the consideration of labour's role in Asia, Africa and Latin America has been taken out. In fact, our foreign policy cannot be successful unless it specifically includes and gives high priority to the activities of worker organisations in these vast areas."

In the years that have followed one exposure after the other has accompanied the AFL-CIO overseas programme, the US Controller General's office has repeatedly questioned the purpose of some of the work while the US AID office, the main financial source, has questioned the relevance of much of the AFL-CIO's overseas work to the needs of the Third World poor which US AID is officially charged to serve.

Despite all this, and a diminishing union membership at home, the AFL-CIO overseas programmes not only continue uninterrupted but are now rapidly expanding. The tactics first developed into a fine art in Latin America have slurped over into Africa and Asia, consolidated by a multi-million dollar budget. In the process the contradictions become every day more apparent.

On the other hand the idea of "free and democratic" unionism is extolled but on the other — as in Latin America — they are engaged in nothing short of war with the Christian and democratic trade unions.

The AIFLD five year plan ('77-'81)\*, for instance, shows that they plan to

\*The AIFLD five year plan 1977-1981 is an interesting contrast to the CLAT four year budget for Latin America and the Caribbean (1976-1980). This shows that no less than 14 European non-government aid agencies, most of them secular, are supporting CLAT affiliates — in effect choosing sides not only against AIFLD and ORIT but also, in many cases, against their own national trade union centres who continue to be associated with ORIT.

conduit cash through the US-based Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers operating in Ecuador which is complaining that one of its affiliates is being infiltrated by "social democrats."

Why when every real workers movement in Chile has been crushed or forced underground are they planning to increase their spending there? The AIFLD say that "the junta has established tripartite committees to review drafts of social statutes, labour codes and social security, unfortunately labour leaders are not satisfied with the results." AIFLD budget for Chile is an annual 179,040 dollars rising to 182,300 dollars this current year, 1978.

The 1977 budget for Brazil was 351,878 dollars. There is no mention in the Argentine country report, prepared for the AIFLD budget, of the massive trade union repression taking place there with thousands of workers killed or incarcerated. The AIFLD is planning to spend an annual 285,000 dollars there.

The AFL-CIO plans to pump an annual 300,000 dollars into Caribbean labour, increasing to 372,000 dollars by 1981. Jamaican Premier Michael Manley has sent emissaries to Meany to convince him about the democratic nature of his government,[2] presumably in response to the US build-up of activity.

There is too, a puzzling entry in their Honduras, Central-America country analysis. After complaining about anti-democratic forces at work with rural labour they list among those they hope to tap for cash for a counter programme none other than the United Nations Development Programme.

And how is it that in Africa and elsewhere various AFL-CIO programmes are able to operate freely while the same countries have booted out the ICFTU and others? (Because most of their cash comes from government, the AFL-CIO must get prior approval of host governments before entering).

A possible answer is to be found in the notes[3] of a conference held in Cornell University, New York, way back in October 1958 attended by members of the AFL-CIO hierarchy and representatives from dozens of US labour unions. The subject was American labour programmes overseas, the speaker John T. Dunlop, then Professor of Economics, Harvard University.

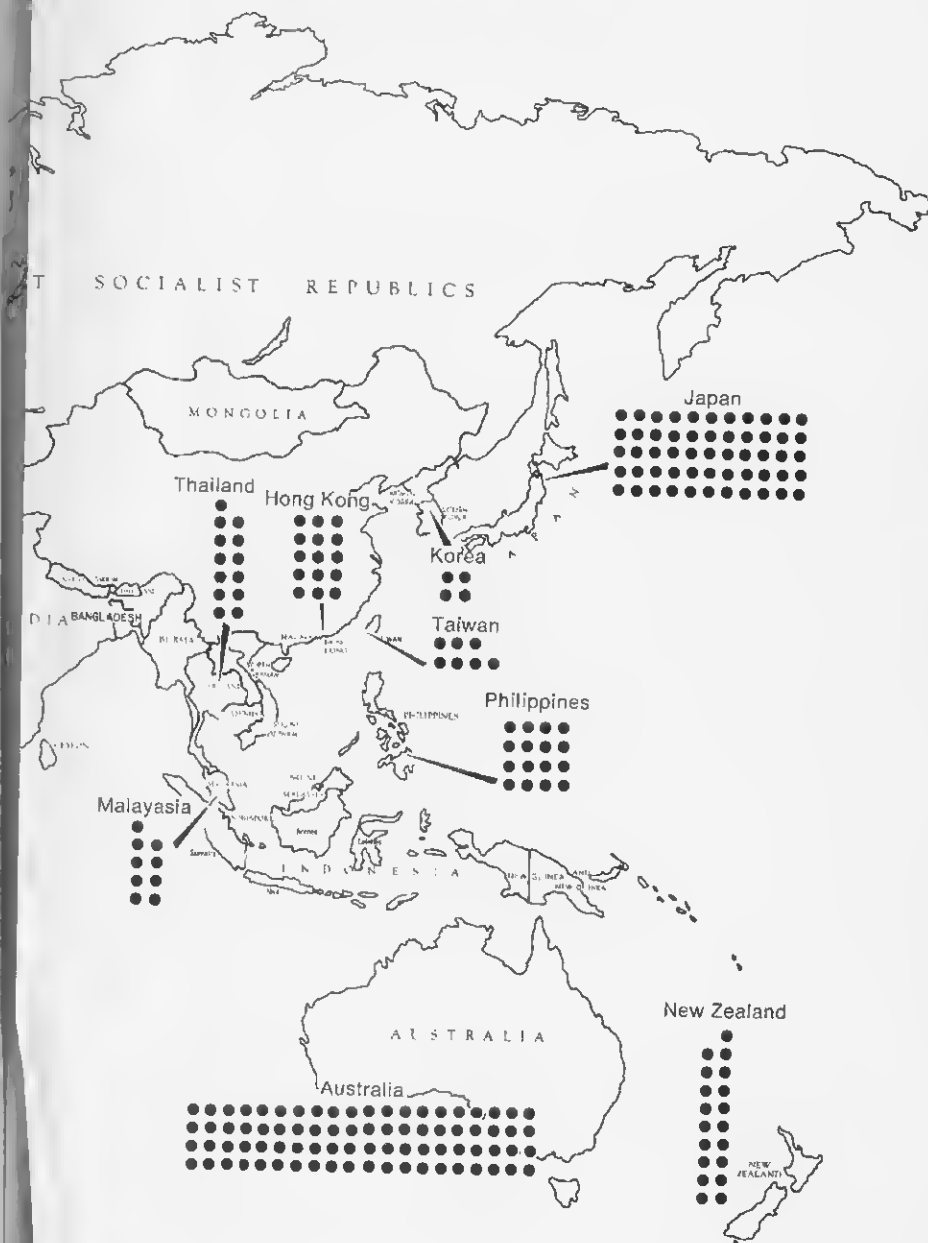
There were two key passages: "When we go to a country like Iraq or Ghana maybe the best advice we can give them is not to have any trade unions, at least for a time, or to have a controlled union." And this: "I think we have got to be reconciled to the notion that for a generation or more these unions are going to be kept unions. It is completely consistent to say that, on the one hand, I am in favour of free and independent unions while, on the other hand, I recognise that in the face of the Communist threat there may be good reasons for these unions to be kept unions. In this argument, our traditional view of the trade unions is an impediment."

Dunlop's arguments may explain why so many governments have an open door policy to the AFL-CIO. They know they'll do a good job of creating tame unions, while crushing the rise of any labour militancy.

### The imperialist pattern

Since that Cornell Conference the AFL-CIO has spent about 25 million

## US Multinationals dot the world



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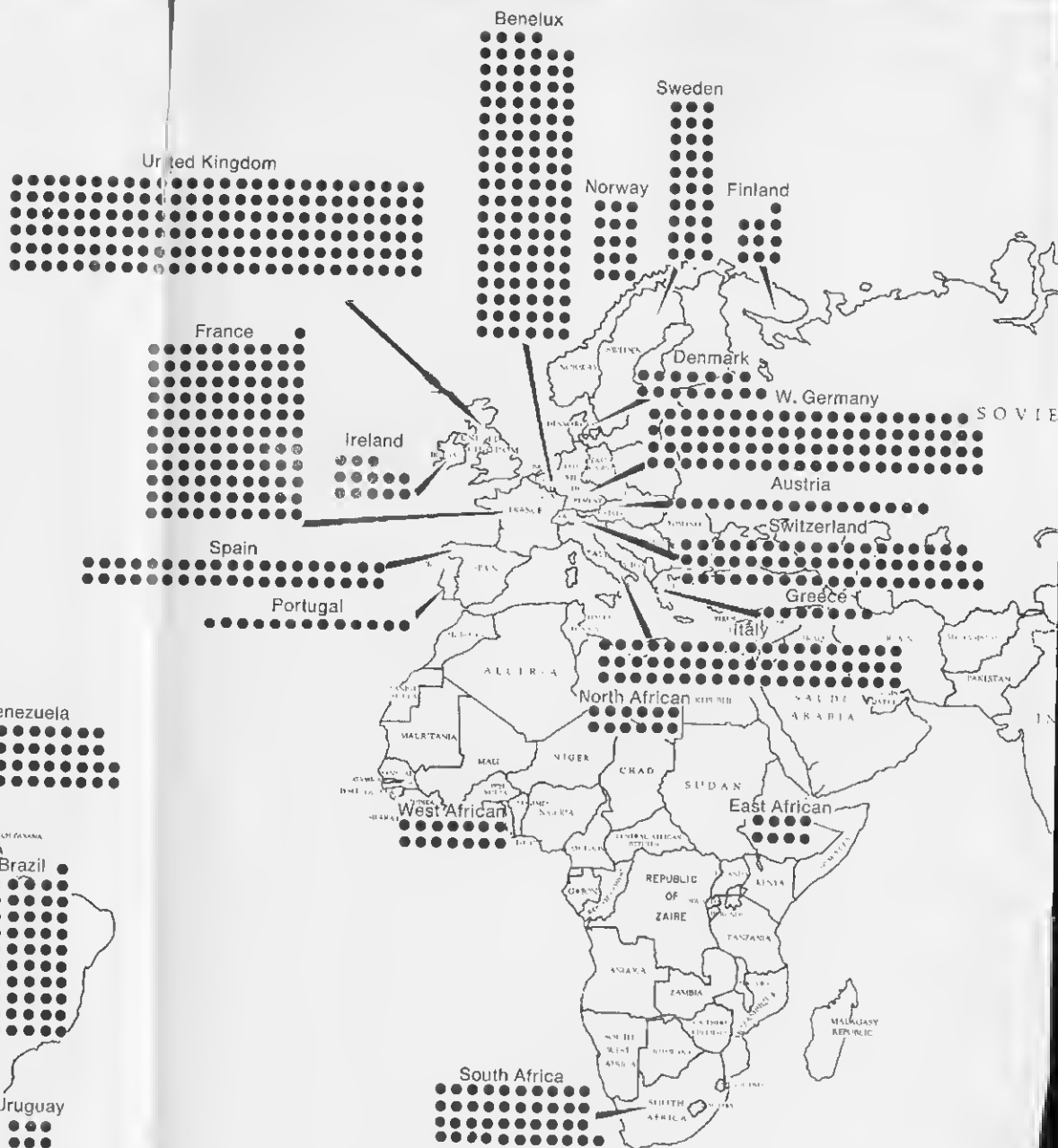
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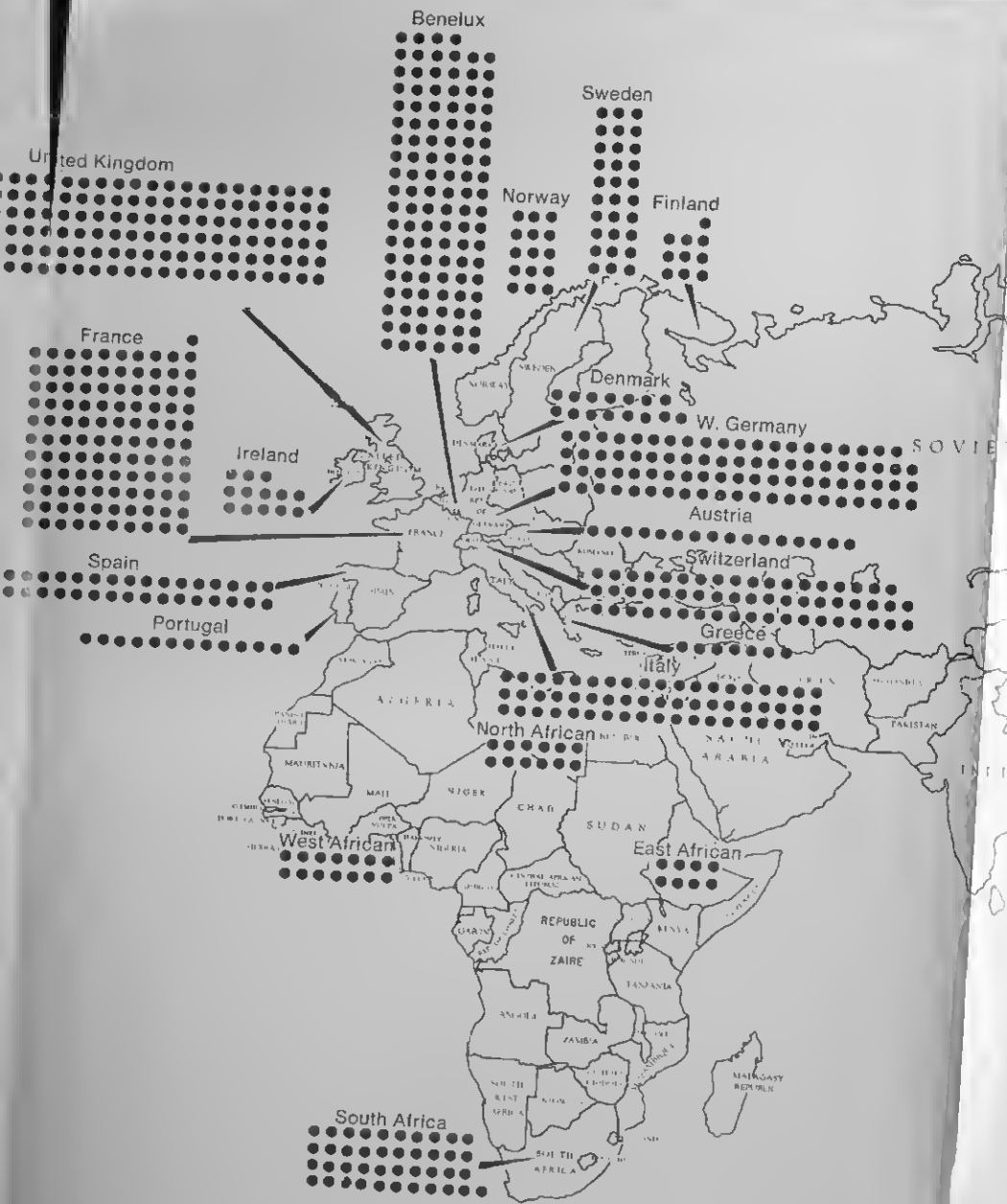
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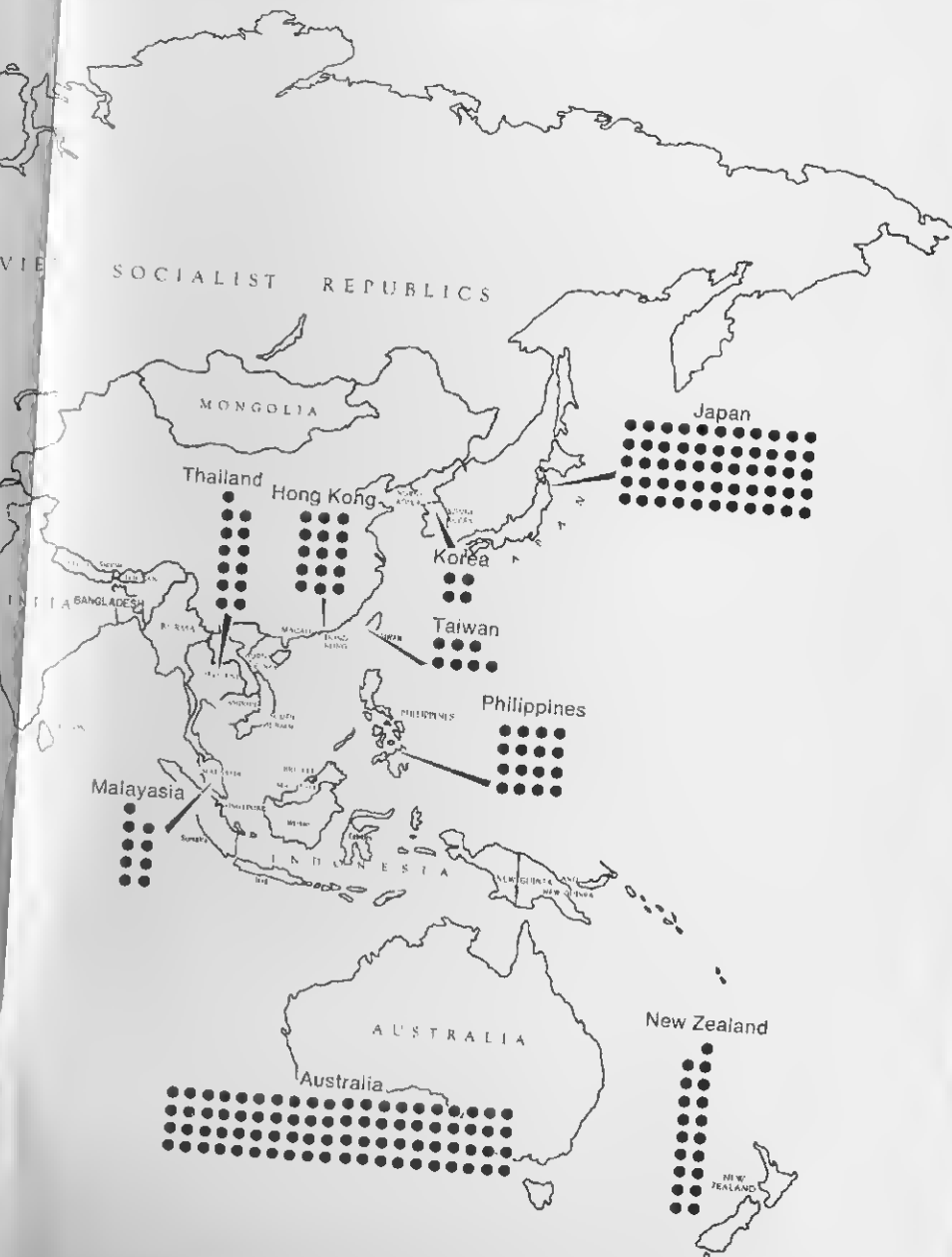
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## US Multinationals dot the world



dollars overseas\*. AFL-CIO regional Third World labour centres receive an annual seven million dollars from US AID. Since 1968 US AID has been giving AFL-CIO related unions an annual million dollars to conduit into some of the ITSS. US journalists have described this US AID cash as being a "CIA orphan." Victor Reuther has made the same charge.

Funds also come from the State Department (for instance, discretionary grants from embassies into AFL-CIO Third World projects) and, of course, big business.

It's the last that provides the only logical interpretation to the US programme. For while it is certainly anti-Communist, it makes more sense to regard it as pro-imperialist helping to smooth the way for US commercial and political interests.

Rodney Larson has done work on the links between AFL-CIO and multinational overseas interests. He writes: "One of the most striking features of the overseas programme of the US government that is carried out via the AFL-CIO's international apparatus is the correlation between the multinational corporate investment and the patterns of the 'labour' activity. US labour activity is heaviest in Africa now in precisely those countries where the US has the largest corporate and/or military strategic presence. The same is true in Asia and Latin America and is amply illustrated by the history of the AFL-CIO and the AIFLD in Chile in those years when US investment was mushrooming and when the US had the heaviest concern over the possibilities of a Socialist government. At that time the inter-America branches of a number of ITSS, which are usually described by experts as heavily dominated or totally controlled by US unions, were extremely active in Chile.

"The AIFLD flooded the country with programmes and advisers. A covert American operation in Christian youth and labour circles was run by a Belgian Jesuit named Fr. Roger Vekemans and open US sources, including Catholic News Services, have described the allocation of tens of millions of CIA and US AID dollars to this programme. All of this directly correlated with the expansion of the US MNC investment and concern in the extractive and manufacturing industries in Chile and the long years of covert activity to 'protect' that investment by keeping Dr. Allende and his supporters out of power.

"Another way of illustrating this point is by a visual comparison with the assistance of the chart, 'US multinationals dot the world', (facing page 70), produced by the AFL-CIO and the stated programme objectives of the AALC, the AAFLI and the AIFLD.

"This, and the comparison made below by Research Associate International in California, will show that there is a direct correlation between the timing and intensity of the AFL-CIO country programmes and the impact and timing of US based MNC direct capital investment.

"The Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) is the government organisation in the US that insures US firms against the dangers of expropriation, war, insurrection and inconvertibility of currency. Eleven other industrialised

\*Figures from calculations done by labour writer Roy Godson, appearing in "Orbis" 1975 and elsewhere. They are, however, considered an underestimate by others.



Members of a Honduras peasant league movement explaining to the press why they felt impelled to seize land for cultivation. Like increasing numbers of Latin American peasant and worker movements they despise the AFL/FLD/ORIT labour axis.

nations have some form of compensation or insurance scheme for their own firms in less developed countries, although these plans are not generally known to the public.

"For instance, firms like ITT, Anaconda and many others have been compensated by the government insurance board for their 'losses' for expropriation.

"In 1976 Research Associate International obtained a cumulative index of all OPIC insurance outstanding anywhere in the world and a listing of all prior OPIC insurance since World War II. The correlations between this form of insurance which is a very accurate barometer of the timing and the amount of insured US investment, and the presence of US labour programmes to train foreign labour leaders and workers was striking. We found that in recent years seventy five per cent of OPIC insured investments had gone to seven countries, and nearly fifty percent to only three nations — South Korea, Indonesia and Brazil."

Larson continued: "This has got to be considered when the issue of government direction of overseas labour programmes comes up in any industrialised country. Is it really the function of the AALC to vocationally train garment workers in Africa so they are proficient and ready for run-away garment manufacturers from the US who are moving partly to use cheap labour? Does this belong in the lexicon of 'labour' programmes in the interests of African or US workers?

"Other examples could be given but it is significant that when RAI asked Garment Workers' union officials about this in the depressed areas of Los Angeles County they refused to believe that the AFL-CIO would have anything to do with such a programme. The head of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union at that time was on the board of the AALC!" Clearly, lack of information is not something confined to British affiliates of the TUC.

#### The dollar trap

The vastness of the American labour programme looks as though it has now just about overwhelmed the traditional ICFTU Third World labour structures. Most of the independent US labour foreign programmes started by battenning on to the ICFTU affiliates. ICFTU global membership percentage figures\* just before the US departure, read like this — Africa 1, Asia 12, Middle East 2, Australia 2, Europe 42, Latin America 15, North America 25, West Indies 1. The significant figure is the 15 percent Latin America membership figure. Without it, and that means without ORIT, the ICFTU would be seen as an overwhelmingly Western body, its world status severely diminished.

The ORIT problem as a result becomes one of the most difficult for the ICFTU. Faced with an abundance of evidence that things were desperately wrong with ORIT, the ICFTU decided in 1975 not to disaffiliate it, still less to insist on

\*From Workers Education Association, background notes on industrial relations, International Trade Union Organisation History, Nos. 2 and 3, 1971.

an end to the AFL-CIO connection now that the US was no longer part of the ICFTU but, instead, to cease financing it.

The central problem remains, however, that while it is an affiliate the western trade union movement is blocked off from any official contact with the genuine worker and peasant movements.

In 1977 the ICFTU part-funded an ORIT emergency congress to try and sort out the mess. Nothing was resolved. The ORIT training school in Cuevernica, however, has gone by the by, deeded over by the ICFTU to the Mexican Government supported Confederation of Workers (CTM).

According to Allan Hargreaves: "We can't disaffiliate from ORIT because it contains so many of our affiliates."

TUC international committee minutes of January 1977, show — perhaps astonishingly in the view of some — that the AFL-CIO joined with ORIT and the ICFTU to draw up a new constitution for ORIT.

The AFL-CIO, in fact, has ORIT over a barrel. At the 1975 Mexico City ICFTU Congress there were hopes that ORIT would be made into an exclusively Latin American organisation. When ORIT officials attended the AFL-CIO Convention during this same period the Americans reminded them about all the US dollars they had received. Would the Europeans make up the difference?

As long as the ICFTU major affiliates want a US return it looks unlikely that firm action over ORIT will be taken unless, of course, there is rank and file pressure and questioning. By late 1977 the ICFTU started on a circular route round this problem — disaffiliating a Paraguayan national centre run by the government. Two more such disaffiliations are expected, and for the same reason.

Meanwhile following up Woodcock's claim that the TUC overseas work contributed toward "adequate and balanced social development in the Third World", I put to Allan Hargreaves some views about their overseas work run through the ICFTU and asked how he reconciled it with this claim.

Hargreaves finally concluded their overseas work wasn't necessarily about helping to remove poverty. He agreed (my words) that it was more "a kind of mutual aid society between certain trade unions and no more."

Current TUC thinking goes something like this: in the past it was important that aid be directed multilaterally so that they were not suspected of acting like colonial overlords. Now there is a different situation. The Third World "knows that the TUC will intervene in a purely trade union way."

Previously the problem was that they did not have enough money to do either properly. That situation has changed with the British government decision to finance their overseas programmes.

The Swedish government also channels Third World funds through national trade union centres. There are differences, however. The Swedes, generally acknowledged as the most loyal of the ICFTU affiliates have repeatedly expressed their concern about the political dangers of independent funding programmes. The result is that the LO national centre is directing funds multilaterally through the ICFTU or ITSs (in common with other Nordic countries they insist that none of their money goes to ORIT) with a battery of provisions to ensure, for instance,

that none goes direct into the fabric of a union but is used instead for grass roots education work.

Despite this safeguard Ake Wedin a member of the LO funding advisory group told me: "We can't escape the fact that we still have to make a political choice. It's inevitable given the situation with Third World unions."

The British scheme will operate bilaterally. One surprising and considerable component is training of Third World trade unionists in the UK, surprising because a number of trade unionists told me that past experience has demonstrated that it carries dangers of separating off potential leadership from the rank and file.

The scheme is designed mainly for the Caribbean and Africa. The situation with the first amply demonstrates the mess into which worker internationalism has been plunged.

It is clear there has been a big build up of US labour programmes in the Caribbean from about the early seventies onwards when the State Department was getting edgy about the prospect of "little Cubas" springing up. One British trade union leader told me about reports of AFL-CIO "topsy-turvy" spending going on, with cash floating around at leadership level. Some Caribbean trade unionists would like to see a stepped up (and competing?) TUC programme there. One country which is thought to have been discussed is Guyana where, incidentally, the government is reported to be trying to place pressure on the national union centre to affiliate with the Communist WFTU.

It describes the trap into which the ICFTU affiliates have fallen — bring back the Americans and a repeat of the sixties is likely; keep them out and they will continue swamping traditional ICFTU structures.

Under these circumstances the view that we can "all get together under the same roof and discuss our differences" appears plausible to some. The first hint I had of dissenting voices came when Hargreaves was insisting that the TUC's overseas interests were "non-political." At one point he said: "You sound like some of the people at the ICFTU."\*

In fact I was to discover that about half of the present ICFTU staff of over 70 are opposed to an American return, no matter the official view of their organisation.

One probable reason is that any ICFTU staffer trying to make sense out of Third World work after the mess of the sixties must be uncomfortably aware that a US return threatens to bring down them, and their work, in a cloudburst of CIA allegations. A key question for the present, however, is that if the ICFTU hierarchy were keen to woo the US back, would they be likely to countenance support to Third World trade unions and peasant leagues competing with the US supported labour structures?

While the ICFTU gives paramount importance to a US return it's also increasingly clear that while they continue to woo the AFL-CIO there is no way trade union unity can be achieved between the ICFTU and the WCL, also based in Brussels.

\*Later a TUC international staff member was to allege that War on Want was in some way collaborating with the ICFTU. The ICFTU will know the absurdity of that suggestion.

### Denting the secrecy

The WCL, whose total world membership is probably only about four million, has for years been regarded by those outside it as one of the most contradictory and by some the most reactionary of the three internationals, its programme influenced by the Catholic Church.

In 1968, however, it threw overboard its Christian title (formerly the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions) and has since gone through a policy upheaval to emerge with a programme that is Socialist and class-based. The leadership now scoffs at any suggestion that the Roman Catholic Church remains an influence. General Secretary Jan Kulakowski told the 1977 WCL Congress that "any idiot suggesting this raises no more than a smile, even from our bitterest adversaries".

Main architect of the change was Emilio Maspero, leader of the WCL's strongest Third World wing, CLAT which has thirty-five union affiliates in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the early seventies Maspero drew up a monumental 400 page report for the WCL, "Solidarity and Liberation, Prospects and Bases for a WCL Strategy", which has become embodied as WCL policy and which WCL General Secretary, Jan Kulakowski, insisted at the 1977 WCL World Congress that there was no going back on.

It should be said candidly that of all the literature from the three internationals it is the WCL's which the author of this report feels warmest toward. It is also the case that some of the most hard-bitten trade union leaders in the ICFTU orbit are sometimes inclined, albeit grudgingly, to show some admiration for the WCL's policy and the ideas behind it. At the same time, however, they are usually quick to elaborate on what they see as the contradictions facing the WCL and which Kulakowski admits himself exist in good measure.

A major value of the WCL is that alone among the three internationals it is now pushing out a major policy programme around which the rank and file can argue while, at the same time, being open about some of its problems. An additional apparent strength is that the bulk of its membership is in the Third World so that it can help bring this global dimension into the European basin.

The flaw — and it may prove to be crucial in the opinion of some — is that while the bulk of its membership is in the Third World, the bulk of the WCL's cash is European, mainly from Holland, Belgium and France where the Christian trade union movement tradition remains.

In the rows that have boiled up over the WCL's policies and actions a key question is the role of the paymasters. Will they go along with the WCL or will the WCL secretariat succumb to the pressure and water down its approach?

At present the WCL is threatened with the loss of its major French affiliate, the French Confederation of Labour (CGFT) which will debate ending the link at its 1979 Conference. It is thought that the Dutch Transport Workers Section may also pull out.

Faced with these difficulties and more beside, Kulakowski consoled himself and delegates attending the 1977 conference with the thought that no matter what their problems, at least affiliates "know that anything is better than the ICFTU."

For the moment it remains a useful irritant to the giant internationals. For years the ICFTU has talked about amalgamating with the WCL, while the Communist WFTU was reporting in the early seventies high hopes of closer collaboration with it. The WCL now describes Eastern Europe as "State Capitalist" and shares with the ICFTU at least the view that the WFTU is captive to Soviet bureaucracy — but there agreements with the ICFTU just about come to a halt. For while the WCL is in favour of regular meetings with both to discuss joint action on specific issues, there seems little prospect of a permanent hook-up with the ICFTU while the latter continues to seek a US entry, or support, in Maspero's words, the "Fascists" of Latin America.

At the October 1977 WCL Congress, Kulakowski claimed that the WCL was now making an honest and positive contribution to the world trade union movement scene. "It has been able to denounce and even prevent certain compromises which nobody else dared call into question in the conformist and red tape atmosphere within international institutions."

One month later in Brussels, on November 24, Kulakowski's predecessor as WCL General Secretary, Jean Bruck, who presided over the organisation during this initial period of change, and who is now top labour adviser to the Common Market, agreed to speak openly about his own, and the organisation's experiences, during his time in office when meeting with Rodney Larson and myself. The interview followed the US departure from the International Labour Office (ILO) a few weeks beforehand.

### Bibliography to Chapter 7.

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3. Labour's Role in Less Developed Countries. Report on a conference held at Cornell University, October 12-17, 1958, New York School of Industrial Relations.



Jean Bruck (left) seated alongside his successor as WCL General Secretary, Jan Kulakowski. (Antwerp-Pers)

## Interview with Jean Bruck

**Q.** What have been the overall consequences, historically, of the American involvement in their Third World programmes, e.g. the Africa American Labour Centre, the Asian American Free Labour Institute and the American Institute for Free Labour Development? What have been the consequences as regards affiliates of the WCL and as regards Third World unions in general?

**Bruck:** We have had experience with these American foundations since the 60s when they started working on the various continents. My personal experience is much more related to Africa as opposed to other continents. But I know through my functions with the WCL the position and the actions of the other foundations in Latin America and Asia.

The trade unions in Africa have been generally funded, created with the help and the aid, a very limited aid, of the British, French and Belgian organisations. It has led to a certain division of the trade unions, but nevertheless generally the type of trade unions that the European organisations have introduced and promoted in Africa were inspired by real motivation, motivation of a real trade unionism... a trade union attitude.

It was in defence of the interests of the workers, promotion of education, promotion of a self-supporting trade union movement in Africa, etc. We have developed in various degrees in the various countries in Africa representative and dynamic trade unions led in many cases by real militant leaders devoted to the cause of the worker in the country. They were generally rather poor but that did not prevent the unions from working as much as possible for the sake and welfare of the workers they represented. The objective of the solidarity fund of the WCL and of the solidarity fund of the ICFTU, also at that time, and sometimes the WFTU, was really to help African workers to organise themselves into strong unions. And to help them help themselves through their own growing groups.

The main difference between the methods of working through these internationals with the funds coming from Europe, and the role of the foundations of the AFL-CIO is really the following: that the American foundations have followed another way. And they have another method. From what I know in Africa they tried, and I say this perhaps abruptly, they tried to buy trade union leaders who were generally poor and had no financial resources. They tried to discover the most influential leaders of the national organisations. They tried to attract them by huge amounts of money and it was incredible for them. They offered aid and help in a very important measure, but with the objective to orientate the trade unions along... following the political line of the foundations, and following the political objectives of the foundations.

They did not take so much care for really developing the organisations themselves and for educating the people in the work of real independence and strong



trade unionism. But they tried to have people at their devotion whom they could manipulate and through whom they could influence and orientate the whole trade union organisation.

I have known by experience a lot of real trade union leaders, African leaders, devoted to their brothers, sincerely ready to make sacrifices at the services of the workers. The enormous aid and the way in which it was donated has completely corrupted their positions and the mentality of the leaders of these trade unions.

It is for this I blame the foundations. The African workers' movement has lost a lot of very important potential leaders who could have remained real trade union leaders and who would have built independent trade unions but who have succumbed, and could not, resist the temptation of seeing so much money for orientating the organisation in the way the foundation wanted.

In the years 1960-70 the Africans were more and more conscious of organising themselves independently from the metropolitan countries. As the African countries became independent, they saw the necessity of uniting their work and of trying to build throughout Africa a strong trade union movement independent of Europe or other forces.

But during that time the various currents of the trade unions i.e. the WCL, the ICFTU, the WFTU and independent non-aligned organisations were coming together and meeting to discuss how to merge or how to enforce and strengthen the trade union movement in Africa. The foundations were present at the conferences, at the meetings, and were influencing through very important gifts of money, the decisions of the meetings and conferences in order to make predominant the influence of the Western bloc, of the Americans, on the African trade unions and not to leave space for any other influence.

I have been personally given testimony of some of these conferences. I have been told by African trade union leaders of the WCL, that when they were coming, for instance, to conferences and joint meetings of the real branches of the trade union movement in Africa in Lagos, in Addis Ababa etc, representatives of the AALC, at that time Irving Brown and his aides and deputies, were present and they were openly sitting in the corridors distributing gifts of money to the African trade union leaders they knew and whom they could influence in order to get a majority along the lines the foundations were wishing. And sometimes they were doing that before the meeting had opened. They were the first in the hotel, they were welcoming the people and they are giving money to the people, sometimes openly in the corridors when Irving Brown and the others were with one suitcase and plenty of money. They were giving the envelopes and they were giving their instructions to the people of the unions. And after the meetings when the meeting was successful in the way the Americans wanted, they were again giving additional envelopes to people who had assured the majority in the meetings. So, for the unions themselves, in Africa, I think that the methods and objectives of the foundation, at least in Africa, has practically led and pushed potentially good leaders of the African workers to leave the trade unions to go into politics, to enter into national operations etc. I say they have helped to destroy in some countries, in many countries, the real chance of trade unionism created by the workers, led by the workers for the interests of the workers.

On the other hand they have, on an African level, caused and created delays in the process of merger and unity of the workers of Africa when Africans were conscious that they had to create strong organisations at the level of the African continent, to become independent of the former metropolitan organisations.

The influence of these foundations on the WCL organisations was not very great. We have suffered much less from these methods than the ICFTU because at that time the AFL-CIO was still in the ICFTU and their objective was more, naturally, established with ICFTU organisations and leaders than with the WCL organisations and leaders. So when the time had come for the creation of the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) by the African organisations, at that time we had practically all WCL organisations intact in Africa. And the Pan-Africa Workers Congress, which the regional organisation of the WCL, decided in a congress out of the presence of the American foundations (they were never invited, I never tolerated them) to merge and dissolve the regional wing of the WCL and go into the new pan-African organisation.

I should say that the influence of the foundation of the WCL in Africa was not really effective. As regards Latin America you know that from the beginning the attitude of the WCL organisation, of CLAT, the regional wing, has been for the same reasons immediately and strongly opposed to tactics and methods of the AIFLD.

At the same time because the foundations were more related with the organisations affiliated to the ICFTU, they have developed their programme much more with these organisations.

**Q. Do you mean, for instance, through the ORIT?**

Bruck: Yes, through the ORIT. In Asia sometime between 1968 and 1972-3, I feared that the American foundation operating there would have more success through the WCL organisations because they had started their operations from the Philippines. Johnny Tan, Secretary General of the Brotherhood of Asian Trade Unions (BATU), the WCL regional wing, was more related with the US having been invited to Washington.

Some Asian leaders of our organisation were invited to follow programmes of education in the US. So for some time we feared that they would succeed in influencing the organisations of the WCL in that region.

But the methods of working and the objectives of these foundations in Asia, Africa and in Latin America are always the same. They are seeking support from the authorities, sometimes from the company, from the government etc. and they try to gain for their views the leaders of the organisations in order to align the organisation itself following the orientation and political line of the American foundations.

**Q. When you said that openly and secretly large amounts of cash were distributed to African delegates, and you have testimony to that effect, under the American legal provisions it is not possible for the Agency for International Development (AID) to distribute money in that form. Nearly all the money that is openly given to the AALC, the AIFLD and the AAFLI is from AID. Therefore there have always been rumours and testimony that this money is coming from the CIA.**

Bruck: It has been said many times in the last years that funds, American funds, in fact from the CIA were channelled through the representatives of the foundations, but it is always very difficult to give evidence of this relationship. Therefore opinions differ from continent to continent.

For instance you know that the CLAT has been saying for many years that the funds are coming from the CIA and that agents of the American foundations were agents of the CIA.

In Africa I think they have begun thinking this kind of working is influenced by the CIA but they could never produce any evidence of the fact.

The European and ICFTU leaders did not pay much attention to the origins of the funds of ORIT. They were told of the funding and the methods of working of the foundations but I'm not sure if they are completely convinced. Also they did not prove the various charges. They did not like the work of the foundations. They are aware of their work since the US withdrawal from the ICFTU — and the activity of the foundations in opposition to the ICFTU.

**Q. Are the AFL-CIO programmes more pro-imperialist than anti-Communist?**

Bruck: I think that the pretext of the action is to develop an anti-Communist action but the real reason is to support and to give space to imperialism. In some countries the programmes of the foundations were in relationship with private industry and always with American business. The vast majority of the funds available to the foundations is not coming from the AFL-CIO but is partly from the government and a big part from very big companies, multinational companies. This is the reason why the trade union organisations are not so much attracted to the programmes of these foundations as before, because now they know that very important giant enterprises cannot be financing genuine worker programmes.

**Q. In Africa and in Latin America now so many of the trade unions have been taken over by repressive governments; they are run as "yellow" and "semi-fascist" authoritarian fronts for the government. At the same time we know from internal documents of the US government which we have brought here with us to Brussels that the AALC, the AIFLD and the AAFLI plan a major expansion of their programmes with the consent of the dictatorships in each case: in Chile, in Paraguay, and in the Dominican Republic. Do you think there is any possibility that the overall situation in the Third World might eventually change, say within the next five or ten years, so that somehow the repressive nature and collaboration between the American multinationals, these institutes, the repressive governments and the captive labour unions might be cracked, that there might be something that could be done to destroy that conspiracy so that there can be a build-up of independent strong trade unions?**

Bruck: Frankly I don't believe that it will be very easy because in the last years there are very few countries, for instance in Latin America, that have real democratic government. The number of dictatorships has increased, and the options open for democratic trade unions in those countries are very limited. Even in countries where it was possible to work openly it has now become more repressive.

I think that one chance of new developments could be the growing conscience of the European organisations. Their support and aid is absolutely necessary, but in another form. There are now more and more national organisations, as in Norway, Sweden, Belgium, Britain and in Germany which feel more concerned with the situation of the workers in the Third World. And this is a changed attitude because up to the last seven or eight years the question of solidarity was thought of only in terms of money. Well, they had a good conscience in giving some money to the solidarity fund of the ICFTU and the WCL. But in the last years more organisations are conscious that money is part of the aid, but perhaps less important, and have developed programmes of solidarity based on common action against the governments, against the multinational companies. . . . The support of the European organisations is not yet adapted, however, to the needs of the Third World worker organisations in spite of this growing conscience.

**Q. There are more and more government funds going into trade union channels, not just US money. There is money from Germany, Sweden, Holland and now Britain. Ake Wedin in Sweden has said there is a danger it could become associated with the foreign policy of certain governments. That is one problem. Another is that because it is increasingly government, not trade union, cash it might minimise the chance of the rank and file being interested in where the money goes and so make more difficult the idea of solidarity.**

Bruck: I think it depends on how the trade union movement in the country is involved in the whole process of collecting money, of adding the government money to trade union money. The system here in Belgium, for instance, is that the trade unions are the sponsors of all projects of aid and they have to bring for the projects half the money or in some cases a bit less. Provided that they give enough guarantee that this project is really relevant to the workers in the country, and is really supporting free and democratic trade unionism, under these conditions the government is supplying money. The government is not drawing up the project by itself. The government is accepting projects coming from the national trade union federation as in the Netherlands or Belgium.

From what I know it has not diminished the interests of the workers or the idea of rank and file solidarity. Because there are more articles in the trade union press of the problems of the workers in the Third World, and about the projects being supported by trade union and government money, I consider that rank and file interest is increasing.

**Q. So it is a question then of how much communication there is with the second level and the third level and the rank and file workers so that they can watch these programmes?**

Bruck: Yes, it depends on the attitude of the national leaders of the organisation. If a small group of national leaders is discussing with the government, and they are managing the programme and projects, and they say nothing about it, of course the workers will not be aware of what is being done and for what purpose.

But, in the last years, especially in the last five or six years, there has been

more and more information in the newspapers and in the training courses of the national organisations on the international dimension of trade union actions. Presently, for instance, in the newspapers of the Belgian organisation, the Confederation of Christian Unions (CSC) there is not one week where at least one or two articles are not devoted to the situation in Guatemala, in South Africa and the like and what the trade union movement itself is doing.

**Q. There are numerous published sources and several admissions by former CIA operatives about their penetration or ownership of the AFL-CIO international affairs department, coming from very diverse groups — radicals and conservatives and from simple scholars. In your past experience did you encounter as much KGB influence in trade union work in the Third World as you did US official influence in efforts to disrupt and control?**

Bruck: From my personal experience and knowledge, no. In Africa there have been some efforts made by the KGB or Soviet unions to support or to gain the support and the confidence of the African trade union organisations. They succeeded in certain countries but they were never able to build a real force, representative in Africa of a real pro-Soviet movement. They have not succeeded in preventing trade unions joining the non-aligned OATUU. From what I know they did not work at the same scale and certainly not with the same methods as the American foundations. You know what is happening in Latin America... the number of their affiliates there has been reduced more and more and presently they practically have no place to establish a headquarters for their regional wing, the Permanent Congress of Latin American Workers (CPUSTAL).

In Asia, they exist in India as an organised group, they also have some groups in Japan, some activities in Australia, but beside three or four countries they have not developed the same work.

**Q. The US withdrawal from the ILO, we have just discovered, appears to be followed by a plan that is so far confidential, i.e. the American government is denying it, but a plan whereby the US government and the AFL-CIO would turn the Organisation of American States (OAS) into a tripartite organisation that would, in effect, duplicate the functions of the ILO in the western hemisphere. When the Americans withdrew from the ICFTU it was clear that they also had prior plans to work unilaterally and bilaterally in the Third World and in effect oppose the ICFTU. Do you therefore think that the American withdrawal from the ILO, based on this information, aside from the western hemisphere plan, will have a healthy influence in permitting more open and frank discussion in the ILO or will this counterplan and the absence of worker delegations from the US result, historically, in a lessening of the importance of the ILO?**

Bruck: That is a complicated question because I have to presume what will be the future attitude of the countries in the ILO. I think that before the withdrawal of the USA it had been travelling all around the world trying to convince other countries to approve the decision of the Americans and to imitate the Americans also. But when the Americans' representative in coming, for instance, to Gabon

says: 'these are the reasons for the Americans going out, and do you approve of our position?', of course the Gabonese say 'yes, we approve.' But I think the American representatives have the false impression that this decision of the Americans will be greeted and saluted with great sympathy by many, many countries. And it is not the case.

I don't believe that the European organisations and governments or the vast majority of the developing countries will be influenced by the withdrawal of the Americans from the ILO.

Whether the discussions will be more frank inside the ILO in the absence of the Americans depends on the attitude of the eastern countries on the one side and of the bloc of the western democracies on the other side. If the governments and workers and employers in the ILO would seek really practical and reasonable solutions to the problems of the ILO, possibly the results can be obtained more easily without the presence of the US representatives... Probably the consensus view will be more easily obtained and established inside the ILO without the Americans because the US representatives, especially on the workers side, are saying that the only acceptable form of regime and government presence in the ILO must have the form of a parliamentary democracy. They objected to any other kind of regime.

**Q. But Irving Brown, US worker representative at the ILO, never objected to the Chilean junta?**

Bruck: Oh no, but this is the problem.

**Q. The ILO with all its faults seems to be the only world body that can fight for workers' rights and try to protect workers. But at the same time there are many complaints that in this field they work too slowly. Is it possible that changes could be made inside the ILO which would make it a much more effective instrument to protect the workers in Chile, in the Argentine, in South Africa and that this process might be speeded up by the US departure?**

Bruck: First, I am of the opinion that when you wish to change an organisation and to modify its method of work, and to increase its efficiency, you have to work from the inside so therefore I consider the departure of the Americans as regrettable, precisely because of the weight of the Americans in the ILO. On the other hand I think that the fact of the US departure is a shock to many governments who are now thinking more seriously about how to adapt the structure to the present day circumstances of the world.

I don't know the plans and intentions of the Director General of the ILO (Francis Blanchard) but I know that presently he is developing a very large political activity throughout all European governments, for instance, in order to know what the attitude is towards the ILO and what they would suggest for its reformation.

**Q. One of the confusing and mysterious things that has bothered some American and British writers about European aid via the national federations to the Third World is exactly the direction and where the money comes from, say in the**

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and some other groups. And, of course, if this is not completely understood, there are sometimes imputations that maybe, for instance, in Germany, the intelligence service (BND) has a role in one of the stiftungs. In your experience has there ever been any problem in the past with the WCL in terms of questioning the real direction of the grant giving officials in the stiftungs?

Bruck: We have never had relations with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. It is always working with the ICFTU organisations. I don't know whether you know the internal system in Germany between the foundations, political parties and the government. Every party, including the Liberal foundation, the Neumann foundation, receives money at the request of the political parties—the SPD, CDU and the Liberal Party, in order to support and develop activities at the service of the developing countries and especially if they wish to do so, in the service of the trade unions.

It has been a problem in the beginning with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung with which the WCL Latin America regional wing, CLAT, first worked before the stiftung extended into Asia and now a little into Africa. There has been a tendency in this stiftung to try and impose its own leanings on who it was giving money to. This problem did not last very long because the CLAT people reacted so violently. They said: "If you are willing to help, then you help in the way we wish to be helped. But you have nothing to say to us about our programmes and projects... you have no right to influence or try to modify our programme."

When I was WCL General Secretary, I tried repeatedly to enter into contact with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in order to be informed of the projects they were discussing, but curiously they have always refused to have direct contact with the WCL, or the Solidarity Fund. It is at the regional level with CLAT, BATU and for a time the Pan African Workers Congress that they had relations. I think they feared we would try and influence the Stiftung. They were not willing to give influence or some power to an international body in which the Germans themselves were not represented. They still have direct contact with regional organisations but not with the WCL.

**Q.** I have never really properly understood the reluctance of the Europeans who sometimes so vigorously opposed Meany, Brown and Lovestone to go back into their US home base and raise these issues by publicity and mailings, and I think that the same perhaps could be said for CLAT and the WCL. You have had tremendous opposition, disruption and subversion from these people yet inside the US there has been no counter-attack.

Bruck: Yes, that's a problem which I cannot explain because it is also true for the ICFTU organisations in Europe. There has never been concerted action on the part of the European organisations who were in the ICFTU to counteract the action of the AFL-CIO on an international level inside the US.

When I was Secretary-General I tried to open the door. I got the approval of the board for appointing George Donahue as our US contact man and I have made some visits to the Department of State, to the Department of Labour and I have visited some Presidents of the union federations. But I did not have very

much time and I was the only one going there, and I could not raise the interest of the European organisations for this kind of contact with American organisations. The US is so big and strange for Europeans, as strange as Europe is for Americans, that they considered the AFL-CIO international work as the affairs of the Americans only and they did not try to interfere, even just for making or giving another explanation and making proposals within the States to explain their position and the reasons why they did not agree with the AFL-CIO on an international level. I cannot give a reason why they did not do that....

**Q.** Even Maspero (Emilio Maspero, General Secretary of CLAT) when he goes to the States seems to be embarrassed that people will accuse him of those US contacts. In the academic community and increasingly because Trans-National Features has publicised so much of CLAT's work, he has an excellent reputation. Well, it is not a fair question but I have never understood why he has never tried to exploit that and create a lot of trouble for his enemies in the AFL-CIO because he could.

Bruck: Yes.

## Chapter 8

**"How many resolutions are going through our trade unions on these kind of problems?"**

The way out of the quagmire, some think, lies with the various International Trade Secretariats (ITSs). They can shake free of the politics and protocol surrounding the ICFTU and get on with doing a simple job across frontiers.

Some of them would claim that this is just what they've been doing over the years and if not enough is known about them it's because they can often enough get their own way with management without having to call on rank and file support. "Once the bosses realise that you've got the information on their overseas activities they usually relent quickly enough," one ITS official told me.

Individual trade unionists do not pay much to their respective ITSs. About ten pence a year is the highest (International Transport Workers Federation) with the average probably between 3p and 5p a year. Nor can it be said we know a great deal about them. While a number can trace their origins back to the Second Socialist International in the late 19th century, today they all float around in a physical and political limbo, their offices dotted around various corners of Europe.

When I checked with my own district officer to find out which ITS my own TGWU branch was linked to, he paused to think before recalling it was the International Federation of Commercial, Clerical and Technical Employees (FIET). He remembered they had done a good job getting him the European pay rates for casino workers.

There are no casino workers in Bangladesh. Nor, for that matter is it usually the plight of the country's clerks, managers or technicians that stops you cold in your tracks. After some weeks of trying to come to grips with the various ITSs I had begun to think of a little scene played out there which seemed to illustrate their splintery weakness.

Some years ago, I was standing on the veranda of a house in Kushtia looking out over a line of women with children slung over their backs, or squatting in the dust at their feet. The queue had been there for hours and was growing steadily longer. Many had walked for hours to get there. The house had been converted into an improvised clinic by three local doctors. It was the only eye clinic in the west of Bangladesh. Many of the children outside were blind, or near blind — the result of a vitamin A deficiency that had clouded over their retinas. It could be put right, however, by a simple operation. The day I arrived the clinic was closing. The few available scalpels were blunted, the drug supply was exhausted.

Now let us suppose that instead of that ragged line finally breaking up to shuffle into the distance these people, and their plight, had suddenly become the responsibility of our ITSs and that standing on the baked earth beneath that



- Miners' International Federation (MIF)*  
Dennis Edwards, General Secretary  
75-76 Blackfriars Road  
London SE1 8HE  
Great Britain  
Membership: 1,269,825 (31.12.1973)
- International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF)*  
Herman Rebhan, General Secretary  
Routes des Acacias  
54 bis — Case Postale 325  
CH-1227 Carouge-Geneva  
Switzerland  
Membership: 13,000,000 (31.12.1975)
- International Graphical Federation*  
Heinz Coke, International Secretary  
Monbijoustrasse, 73  
CH-3007 Bern  
Switzerland  
Membership: 835,386 (31.12.1974)
- International Federation of Chemical, Energy and General Workers' Unions (ICF)*  
Charles Levinson, General Secretary  
58 rue de Moillebeau  
CH-1211 — Geneva 19  
Switzerland  
Membership: 6,000,000 (29.10.1976)
- International Union of Food and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)*  
Dan Gallin, General Secretary  
Rampe du Pont-Rouge 8  
CH-1213 Petit-Lancy  
Switzerland  
Membership: 2,152,077 (31.12.1973)
- Universal Alliance of Diamond Workers*  
Albert Buelens, General Secretary  
Plantin-en-Moretuslei, 66-68  
B-2000 Antwerpen  
Belgium  
Membership: 10,880 (31.12.1971)  
10,400 (31.12.1968)
- International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF)*  
Charles Ford, General Secretary  
Rue Joseph Stevens, 8  
B-1000 Brussels  
Belgium  
Membership: 4,800,000 (31.12.1973)
- Public Services International (PSI)*  
Carl. W. Franken, General Secretary  
Hallstrom House  
Central Way  
Feltham (Middlesex)  
Great Britain  
Membership: 4,131,944 (31.12.1972)
- International Federation of Plantation, Agricultural and Allied Workers (IFPAAW)*  
Stanley G. Correa, General Secretary  
17 rue Necker  
CH-1201 Geneva  
Switzerland  
Membership: 1,400,000 (31.12.1975)
- International Transport Workers' Federation (ITWF)*  
Harold Lewis, General Secretary  
Maritime House  
Old Town, Clapham  
London SW4 0JR  
Great Britain  
Membership: 5,000,000 (31.12.1973)
- International Federation of Free Teachers' Unions (IFFTU)*  
Andre Braconier, General Secretary  
Avenue Bergmann, 111  
1050 Brussels  
Belgium  
Membership: 1,200,000 (31.12.1971)
- Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International (PTTI)*  
Stefan Nedzynski, General Secretary  
36 avenue du Lignon  
CH-1219 Le Lignon-Geneva  
Switzerland  
Membership: 3,246,417 (1.7.1975)  
2,373,056 (31.12.1968)  
2,612,741 (31.12.1969)
- International Secretariat of Entertainment Trade Unions (ISETU)*  
J. Schweinzer, President  
c/o Gewerkschaft Kunst, Medien,  
Freie Berufe  
Maria-Theresien Strasse, 11  
A-1090 Wien  
Austria  
Membership: 492,741 (31.12.1975)
- International Federation of Commercial Clerical and Technical Employees (FIET)*  
Heribert Maier, General Secretary  
15 avenue de Balexert  
CH-1211 Geneva 28 28  
Switzerland  
Membership: 6,000,000 (1.7.1975)
- International Federation of Building and Woodworkers (IFBWW)*  
John E. Lofbad, General Secretary  
27-29 rue de la Coulouvreniere  
CH-1204 Geneva  
Switzerland  
Membership: 3,000,000 (31.12.1974)

Source: TUC

veranda were all the scores of their employees. It's not hard to imagine another scene, just as peculiarly awful, taking place.

The services of translators would be called for and an attempted weeding out process would take place where "each to his own" would take on its consummate idiocy. Hands up the post workers, the entertainers, the food workers, the teachers, the clerical workers, the public service workers, the shoe and leather workers, the journalists, the technicians, the graphical workers, the printers, the miners, the engineers, the metal workers... hands up the transport workers, the textile workers, the chemical workers, the oil workers, the diamond workers (for yes, even the last has its own international).

Finally when that bundle of humanity remained impassive, vacantly staring at these strange western people there might be an expectant hush while someone from the agricultural workers stepped forward — "Hands up the union members."

And, of course, not a limb will move. It will be time to depart, each to his own way.

That imagined scene is not so far fetched. Our various ITSs are constitutionally incapable of extending solidarity to any but their own, mirroring our own western industrial order and dividing man from man in the same fashion.\*

C.W. Franken, General Secretary of the Public Services International (PSI) admits it's a problem. Time after time, he said, they were tempted to try and push through help to groups of the organised poor in the Third World. They would spend a long time looking for a trade union link that would justify this. Often there was none.

"We have inherited a very conservative and a very traditional structure. It's difficult to change. I don't want to sound cynical, but how many resolutions are going through to our unions on these kinds of problems. We can't get the information through to them."

I was to be told repeatedly that the ITSs were the real hope for the future because unlike the ICFTU they were closer to the rank and file and had years of practical experience behind them. Just as regularly many of the ITSs confessed to me that probably most of their membership didn't know the first thing about them.

Start totting up their income, however, beginning with the annual one million pounds that flows into the coffers of the Geneva-based International Metal Workers Federation (IMF), lump in their total staff size, and you've got something considerably in excess of the ICFTU.

The Geneva-based International Federation of Chemical and General Workers led by Canadian Charles Levinson, who previously worked with Victor Reuther in the CIO's European office in Paris, is making use of a computer to keep track of the global movement of multinationals. Yet when I spoke to the International Federation of Plantation Agricultural and Allied Workers (IFPAW), the ITS dealing with the mass of humanity in the rural areas, I was told they couldn't even afford to buy a landrover for their field staff let alone buy computer time.

\*On occasion some ITSs have given assistance to victims of natural disasters in the Third World, but this is an exception to the general policy of working only with affiliates.



IFPAW, like the people they represent, are bottom of the heap. General Secretary Stanley Correa told me: "Our members just don't have the money. We've got a disastrously thin budget. We've got people in Latin America doing difficult dangerous work without transport to get them about. They've got to depend on the peasants for food."

IFPAW has 20 union educators in Latin America. They often, according to Correa, face risk of arrest.

The problem is not merely lack of cash. It's also lack of peasant trade unions. They exist in Latin America, but hardly at all in Africa where it was only in late 1977 that IFPAW introduced a field worker. Total IFPAW world membership is only about three and a half million.

Traditionally IFPAW has had to count — and still does — on money from the ICFTU Solidarity Fund but with this fund reduced to only about half a million pounds a year it has to be thinly spread. Most missionary societies are in a healthier state than IFPAW.

What sometimes surfaces from among some other ITSs is the idea that their industrial-based work in the Third World directly and indirectly helps the village poor. The argument runs that if there is high wage economy in the industrial sector of Third World countries there will be a "spill-down" effect. There will be more work for the street poor like the shoe-shine boys, rickshaw operators and the like. Moreover because many of the factory workers have retained links with their villages extra money will flow into the rural areas.\*

This view, in essence drawn from the capitalist theory of economic growth, is increasingly rejected even among those who were once its greatest proponents and who believed that the Third World would have to develop along the same lines as our own western societies. Among those rejecting it now is the ILO.

An ILO officer angrily told me that all this view was helping to do was smash up rural life. Talking directly about some western trade union action in the Third World he exploded: "Look at the Jamaica bauxite industry! The wages there are five times the national average [author's note: some put it higher] and it's creating the most hellish competition for jobs. Sure, it might create a few extra jobs for people in the town, but why are they coming to the town in the first place?"

There was no way, he said, that the Third World cities could absorb many more people without collapsing. Yet the fact remains that the western trade union movement, based as it is largely around industrial organisation, has barely any contact with the mass of the Third World peasantry and unemployed on the periphery of capitalist development and this is undoubtedly true also of the Communist WFTU and its own trade departments.

The existence of so many ITSs, and their apparent inability to combine across trades, emphasises this problem. It is also the case that because of their

\*The "spill down" theory seems to figure as part, at least, of the overall view of some ITSs. It surfaced, for instance, at a Jakarta, 1976, conference organised by the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation (but does not necessarily reflect its overall policies).

remove from the paying membership both in the west and in the Third World it is not altogether easy to determine just what their policies and politics are or who, indeed, determines them.

That the last is important is emphasised by a disturbing and closely researched document[1] detailing the Latin American activities of the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF), most powerful of all the ITSs and the one most quoted by labour writers as pointing a way forward.

In September 1977 German labour researcher Werner Wurtele presented a 63-page report on the IMF in Latin America[1] at a conference discussing Third World strikes at the Institute of Social Studies in the Hague.

Wurtele had travelled extensively throughout Latin America preparing the report concentrating on the car plants which, he argued, occupies the key industrial position even in the most underdeveloped countries.

Wurtele explains about the IMF that while there is increasing Japanese influence, "nevertheless the US United Automobile Workers and the (German) IG Metall determine IMF policies, unopposed."

In the beginning, he says, the IMF followed policies oriented around Socialist goals but then after World War II, due to the continuing economic stability in the metropolitan countries, it increasingly followed pragmatic and reformist policies. Nevertheless, he says, the IMF still belongs to the "left faction" within the ITS/ICFTU spectrum.

Wurtele does full justice to the IMF successful solidarity actions. All those in Latin America between the years 1968-74 are listed. One example will show the present and potential power of the IMF.

Wurtele shows how in 1975 the entire IMF apparatus and its major affiliates took quick and coordinated action to successfully block General Motors closing down its Mexico City plant and moving into an underdeveloped region of the country where the government was holding forth the inducement of cheap land, and a ten-year tax holiday. The move would have meant the loss of 2,600 jobs in the Mexico City plant. News of the event was broken to the workers after the company had rejected union demands for higher wages and better working conditions.

The regional office of the IMF got involved. Letters and telegrams of support went to the workers from the UAW Washington office and the IMF itself. The General Director of the Mexico City plant was told that 12 million metal workers throughout the world stood behind the demands of the Mexican workers.

The Mexican workers then took strike action. The UAW said it was willing to give them financial help. The IMF stepped up pressure on General Motors and the Mexican government. After 28 days of strike action the company gave in. The jobs were saved and a new labour contract was agreed granting most of the union demands.

Wurtele praises the IMF for this action, reserving special credit for what he calls the "extremely useful" function of the IMF co-ordinator of the world council the ITS had established to come to grips with the various car giants.

But he then goes on to ask how the IMF uses its considerable power when

some or all of the carworkers are members of unions with openly Socialist policies?

Just how does the IMF, which demands general trade union rights such as recognition and the forty hour week, respond to the struggles of carworkers who because they are denied democratic processes in Latin America are seen to be engaged in direct political confrontation with the State or, indeed, with a trade union bureaucracy that is under the thumb of the State?

The IMF, more than almost any other ITS, must be familiar with this problem. About one half of its Latin American membership has been lost to it in the trampling of human rights in Brazil, and after its office there was switched to the Argentine most of its affiliates there, since the March 1976 coup, are under government control.

Here's how Wurtele interprets their current position. "Although the representation of the IMF grew with the internationalisation of production in Latin America, its position today is nevertheless more than precarious — as is the case with the entire Latin America workers' movement.

"On the one hand the IMF finds itself confronted with many military dictatorships hostile to the trade unions. On the other hand they are confronted by a working class that increasingly demands basic social changes, the scope of which the IMF is at present not willing to accept."

Wurtele says flatly that the IMF will only initiate contact with those trade unions they consider "free and democratic" and that the IMF will "only assume an internationalist position when it serves their economic interest."

He points out that the IMF maintains no contact with some carworkers in Mexico, Brazil and Peru because their unions' demands go beyond IMF "integrationist policies".

And he asks whether or not the IMF is actually hindering the cause of international solidarity.

In Brazil he says carworkers were distressed to find that leading IMF functionaries when they went there were received by the military government not as trade unionists, but as members of the board of West German companies (a result of the system of industrial co-determination in West Germany whereby trade unionists have seats on the board of directors.)

In Mexico he found that a movement of independent trade unions had been formed — the Sindicatos Independientes — critical of the existing trade union bureaucracies and with a Socialist programme. At the time of Wurtele's researches it had over 100,000 members and was still growing in numbers. Despite this, he says, the IMF has labelled this independent movement as Communist and excluded them from possible solidarity help.

Study of a carworkers' strike in the Argentine in 1975 revealed not only an IMF failure to give support but, apparently, at least one wing of the IMF trying unsuccessfully to break the strike which enjoyed widespread support not only among all the carworkers, but also in the local community.

It happened after the Mercedes Benz plant reduced a number of social benefits to the workers and refused to obey agreements made with the official union leadership. The workers decided on strike action. General assemblies were



An Indian car worker. Will he and others in the Third World have the chance of enduring links with their Western counterparts if the International Metalworkers Federation ignores those aligned to politically unacceptable unions?

held. At one of these a factory committee was elected. The official union leadership refused to recognise the committee. They suggested a new assembly, called by them, setting the date for a new election. It was rejected by the workers and the strike continued.

Within a few days the company, in concurrence with the official union leadership, fired 117 so-called activists and threatened another 400 with the same fate. The strike continued. Workers and peasants throughout the area brought food and their cash savings to help the strikers. Finally, despite the appeals of the government and official union leadership not to relent, Mercedes Benz finally gave in. The workers won all their demands.

Wurtele reveals that during the strike the official and discredited union leadership used their international connections with the IMF to get IG Metall in Stuttgart to demand of the company non-recognition of the factory committee.

### Secret funding

The problems facing the IMF are to a large extent the same problems facing many of the ITSs in Latin America, particularly those who unswervingly hold to the ICFTU concept of "free and democratic" trade unions. There are other related problems, however, which go deeper and which conspire to make it all the harder for rank and file membership either in the West or in the Third World to understand what is going on among some of the ITS bureaucracies.

The financial weakness of some of the ITSs would mean that, for some, American cash would be seen as a salvation. There is equally no question that by now others regard it as a potential threat.

A British trade union leader told me that he had no doubts that by the middle sixties Meany considered the ITSs more important than the ICFTU. It is also known that the State department thought likewise, arguing, for instance, that they weren't prepared to finance Indian steel mills and then see a Communist union spring up on the site. They needed to get closer to the trade union base, and the ITSs were the best vehicle.

First hint of what was to come was when Jules Poulsen former leader of the Geneva based International Union of Food and Allied Workers went to Washington and discovered that he had a number of "staff members" in Latin America he had never heard of before. They were on the CIA payroll allegedly recruited by Andrew McLellan of the AFL-CIO. Poulsen immediately closed down offices in San José, Costa Rica and Santiago. Other ITSs were to be caught out.

The London based Public Services International (PSI) acknowledged to me that money sent to Guyana for a "straightforward union job" was used instead to help prime the strikes that brought down Premier Cheddi Jagan elected in 1961. The CIA preferred the more pro-American Forbes Burnham. Dr. Arnold Zander, former head of the principal US union affiliate to the PSI, the American Confederation of State, County and Municipal Employees has confessed that his union received CIA funding and that it was used in many areas.

Victor Reuther wrote in 1976 that the PSI (Public Services International) had been "less than vigilant" over the Guyana affair.[2]

Another trick widely believed to take place is the channelling of CIA money into the overseas activities of the US based unions which then undertake programmes in the Third World under the name of the appropriate ITS.

For about half a dozen ITSs the largest single membership is American and there are straightforward reasons for heavy US interest in the ITSs. The US was the first country in the west to suffer the movement out of jobs and capital and would naturally want to see the ITSs stiffened to help staunch this flow.

That being said the degree to which some ITSs seem prepared to co-operate not just, for instance, with ORIT (and a number continue to do so) but even with the open independent AFL-CIO programmes in the Third World raises serious questions about the eventual use to which rank and file money is being put.

British and European postal workers could usefully ask for instance, of their own ITS, the Postal Telegraph and Telephone International (PTTI) why it appears to work alongside the AIFLD and indeed why it was strongly denounced along with the AIFLD at the 1977 CLAT conference.

In 1967 Washington journalist David Langley wrote that only two ITS seemed able to conduct activities independently of the AFL-CIO, the Miners International Federation and the International Metalworkers Federation.\* However, it is also true that since then there have been a number of rows inside some of the ITSs with the result that, for instance, the International Transport Workers Federation no longer accepts US AID cash (the US AID channels about a million dollars a year into the work of some ITSs, or through the overseas work of some US unions affiliated to ITSs).

It is also the case that Charles Levinson of the International Chemical and General Workers Federation (ICF) carried on a lengthy jurisdictional war with the Denver based International Federation of Petroleum and Chemical Workers (IFPCW) widely believed to be a CIA creation. The last always admitted taking large amounts of official US government funding and did in fact dissolve themselves in 1976 in part because of the repeated exposures of their CIA origins.

The US is now creating another Inter-American equivalent of the IFPCW to fill some of the vacuum created by the dissolution of IFPC. Official reports\*\* will show that programme grants for "labour" work in the Caribbean in this field had as a primary justification the prevention of rising calls for nationalisation of natural resources. Venezuela and Jamaica with oil and bauxite are the main concerns.

It may be that the risks facing the ITSs are all the greater because of their isolation one from the other. While it is true that they meet together once a year there is little sign of anything like a common programme emerging. An official of the International Transport Workers Federation indicates the potential strength of some, but also the heavy cost of this disunity.

After explaining that they had clawed back nearly five million pounds in backpay for their seafaring members in 1977 he observes that they now have a more widely developed and systematic chain of global contacts than the ICFTU.

\*Reprinted in the WCL Newspaper, "Labour," 1967.

\*\*AIFLD regional plan 77-81.

"We learned 15 years before the ICFTU that a large amount of money doesn't work. It creates a vested interest among Third World unions in being weak."

But then he goes on: "The worst thing that's happening now is the wholesale worker repression. If only we could combine across trades, that could be an effective countervailing force. As it is we leave action against repression up to the ILO and that's too slow, or leave it to the ICFTU and that's no bloody good."

A vital question centres round the relationship between the ITSs and the ICFTU. The 1951 Milan agreement struck between them provided for the independence of the ITSs while agreeing they go along with the general policies of the ICFTU.

But what if these policies have got little to do with genuine worker solidarity or sometimes, as I have tried to show, nothing to do with normal trade union practices? Just how free are the ITSs to go their own way?

Broadly speaking the ITSs deal with industrial matters, the ICFTU with global concerns but there is an overlap that causes problems.\* Some ITSs, for instance, refuse to have any dealings with ORIT. Others do so and, indeed, the PTTI has written into its own rules, for instance, a stricter adherence to the ICFTU policies than many of its counterparts would even contemplate.

This issue has become increasingly important not just because the ITSs are now being advanced as the way forward but because the differences between them over following the ICFTU line indicate that there may not, in fact, be much prospect of anything like a common action programme being developed. In that case, looked at from a Third World point of view, they come to be seen not only as irrelevant, but perhaps dangerously irrelevant.

There is another rub to the ITSs and, indeed, to the entire panoply of our international trade union structures. It's something to do again with our Bangladesh queue.

If our various ITSs had trekked behind that queue as they returned to their villages they would have found, for it was in the aftermath of the Bangladesh war, that the peasants were making frantic efforts to revive the jute industry, the mills bombed or fired out of existence. They would have perhaps learned that at exactly the same time the Common Market was planning to freeze out their jute supplies to the West.

\*One current example of the sometimes thorny problems between the ITSs and ICFTU involves the International Chemical and General Workers Federation (ICWF). Its General Secretary, Charles Levinson, has asked the ICFTU that its regional wing, ORIT, disassociate itself from the AIFLD and the latter's attempt to start a rival to the ICWF in the Western hemisphere. The ICFTU said it had been assured by ORIT that it was not helping to set up a rival, that "it had no information on AIFLD activities" and that they "doubted whether the ICWF had grounds for their allegations". Internal AIFLD and other US documents in the possession of RAI and War on Want prove that all AIFLD projects are to be closely coordinated with ORIT and that ORIT does, in fact, receive official US government funding. Juan del Pino, the new Secretary General of ORIT is a nominee of the Venezuelan oil workers union (playing a key role in the federation Levinson is talking about). Under these circumstances the ORIT reply seems strange indeed. It is also true that one of del Pino's first acts on taking up the ORIT office was to meet with Meany and AIFLD head Bill Doherty to coordinate activities.

Perhaps then there might have been some trade union voices raised to remind us how during our own "hungry thirties" these same people helped keep our own people in work in Dundee and elsewhere. Other voices might have been heard pointing out that the same process was also putting some of our own mill people on the scrapheap.

For it is the destruction of the idea of solidarity, even more than the miserable tale that lies beneath trade union overseas spending, that marks the real low point to the present structures, some of the consequences dealt with in the remainder of this report.

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2. "The Brothers Reuther" Victor Reuther.

## Chapter 9

"International Solidarity is something we just sing about"  
— Dutch worker.

May Day, 1977, in Santiago, Chile. The junta holds its own gathering for "official" trade unionists. Over 100 unions are denied the chance to meet. Cardinal Raul Silva Enriquez invites them instead to a commemoration service in the Cathedral.

Assembled on a platform behind the altar and hidden by a line of priests are Ken Toon, Edward McKie and Joe McKie of the British National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

The year before a member of the Chilean Central Union of Workers (CUT), now forced into exile, pleaded with the NUM conference to send a delegation to Chile to find out for themselves what was happening.

The three British delegates entered as "tourists" following a visit to the Bolivian miners' compounds. They discovered, in Chile, that the arrests and killings continued but in the end it was the Bolivian visit that proved the most fateful.

Their report about the conditions under which the Bolivian miners had to work immediately led the NUM to protest to the British government over a proposed £19 million aid grant to Comibol, the Bolivian State mining company. The Bolivian miners, they said, were emphatic that it would not benefit them.

The campaign picked up force when the NUM published a report on the Latin America visit "Trade Union and Human Rights in Chile and Bolivia".[1] It led to an internal government row with one section arguing the grant would pave the way for commercial opportunities. The miners, and Judith Hart, Minister for Overseas Development, won. The grant was scrapped.

The delegation said the mines were under army control after a strike in 1976. Believing that the state mining company would refuse them entry they went underground secretly. They discovered that safety regulations, and sometimes safety masks, didn't exist. Average life expectancy for a miner was 30 years. It was normal to work twelve hours a day, seven days a week. The situation was doubly oppressive, they said, because of the miserable living conditions. The miners were permanently subject to the threat of eviction. After their strike about 600 were made homeless and many exiled.

Here is an extract from an interview with a miner's wife: "We were only asking for a decent standard of living. They threw our husbands in prison and then exiled them; their families were thrown out of their homes and their children suspended from school.

"This is a zone of terror. A week ago they took a friend of mine prisoner.

I don't know where she is. There's no guarantee for anyone, not for the miners, not for the women, not for the children.

"In 1961, the women started to organise here to get their husbands out of prison. They had been put there by the government. We went on hunger strike and got them out. Women have to participate; it's wrong to expect men to do everything. We used to fight and shout with our husbands because the children didn't have enough shoes, because they didn't have enough to eat; but then we realised our husbands are killing themselves in the mines, that they don't get paid for the sacrifices they make. It's not them we should be shouting at. We organised the Housewives Committee in 1961. They started to persecute us as well. I was in prison three times. I lost a baby. I was eight months pregnant and I was so badly beaten that I lost it.

"Bolivia is a rich country. But it needs capital to exploit its resources. It comes from the outside, especially from the United States. They direct the repression too. We are working to pay our oppressors.

"Our men die young. They die just when our children need the guidance of a father, when they need more food and attention. There are hundreds of widows wandering around here with nowhere to go and nothing to feed the children. There's no work for young people.

"We have to be mothers, wives, cooks, cleaners, workers and pack animals. Fifty percent of our children die. I would like my son to study, but he will probably replace his father in the mine.

"They call us terrorists. But they are the only terrorists. It's not the people that massacre and kill. During the last strike they came looking for me. They knew I was eight months pregnant and even went to the hospital and searched it bed by bed. I was hiding in the mine, sometimes in total darkness. I had to come out, I was almost suffocated by gas. I ended up in hospital for two months. They couldn't let anyone see me. I was expecting twins and one of them died, killed by the gas when I was in the mine. They owe me two babies now. . . ."

Judith Hart Minister for Overseas Development has since said she will try and get some aid through to the miners direct.

After her previous spell in that post, however (demoted June 1975, reappointed February 1977) she was to tell me something that at the time seemed incomprehensible.

When I asked her how often the TUC had made approaches to the Ministry on Third World issues she replied that as far as she could remember they had never bothered to do so.

In 1977 a senior official at the same Ministry told me that as far as he was concerned this situation hadn't changed although in the intervening period Hart's former Parliamentary Private Secretary, John Grant MP, had tried hard to encourage their interest. The official added: "They may have written us a few letters, but don't let them kid you that they're really concerned about the Third World."

The miners' action, then, points to a vast hole at the centre of our solidarity, the extent of which can be gauged by thumbing through House of Commons Select Committee Inquiries into overseas aid.

In 1975 and into the first months of 1976, for instance, a mixture of

academics, charities and management consultants gave evidence to one such Inquiry. The TUC, despite spending a third of its total income on overseas work, didn't bother to put in an appearance.

There was no such hesitation by the bosses. Management consultants McKinsey's were there, for instance, describing how they were helping to build up Socialism in Tanzania. At the time of writing they had completed plans for the lay-off of thousands of workers in West Germany, Belgium and Holland employed in the Akzo fibre giant (later successfully resisted by the workers).

The TUC missed the chance to question why less than a third of government aid (and one estimate put it as low as ten percent) went to the rural poor or why, indeed, some is directed toward the Indonesian government while persecution of Indonesian workers is rife.

They lost out too on the chance to puncture what was to become government policy, the use of aid money to pay for British multinational pre-investment studies in the Third World. When we recall the miserable wages British multinationals paid to Sri Lanka tea labourers or South African workers, any trade unionist present would surely have raised his fist to the heavens insisting, at the very least, that companies helped in this manner should agree to observe the basic ILO conventions regarding treatment of workers and their right to organise.

The miners action by contrast came like sunshine. What makes it revealing is that the condition of the Bolivian miners was already known to the trade union hierarchies in the ICFTU orbit following an ILO on the spot investigation. What makes it cheering is that here, at least, was one occasion when a Third World worker appeal for help didn't disappear into a bureaucratic maw like the strange case of the Sri Lankan tea workers.

In 1975 a television and War on Want report "The State of Tea" revealed the suffering of Sri Lankan workers at the hands of British companies. Many of them were trade unionists, most members of the Ceylon Workers Congress, an ICFTU affiliate. The considerable British trade union protest that followed these revelations pointed to sustained trade union pressure on the British government and companies like Brooke Bond.

Various reports thumped down on the desks of the ICFTU and TUC. Two ITSSs, the International Federation of Plantation Agricultural and Allied Workers (IFPAW) and the International Union of Food and Allied Workers (IUF) investigated. The ICFTU also prepared a report based on an on the spot investigation and this too went to the TUC.

According to the Ceylon Workers Congress, the job in hand following nationalisation of the estates was pressure on the British government on the issue of compensation. Only the TUC had the necessary muscle to push this through. A glance at two of the demands reveals why.

Assuming the companies had to receive compensation in the first place (the British government argued nationalisation without compensation would erode international practice) the tea workers wanted the money diverted back into Sri Lanka to be used by the United Nations or non-government agencies to help rehabilitate the tea workers.

Realising this would be inadequate they wanted the British government to



supplement this to compensate not only for the human cost, but also the environmental damage on the estates caused by soil erosion.

What actually happened inside the inner-sanctum of the TUC is a mystery. The 1975 report to the TUC conference contains this paragraph: "The situation of the working people, most of them Tamils, on tea estates in Sri Lanka has been kept under close review through contacts with the ICFTU, IFPAW, trade union organisations in Sri Lanka, and with British government departments. The report of an Inter-Parliamentary Union delegation to Sri Lanka on conditions on British-owned tea plantations there, has been studied and enquiries made by the General Council about the ownership of tea estates by British companies, about the degree of trade union organisation on the estates, about legislation on collective bargaining there and about the activities of the Sri Lanka State Plantations Corporation and the Land Reform Commission."

So we know that reports were studied and enquiries made — but was anything actually done? The circumstantial evidence is that nothing was done and the workers' appeals were ignored.

The ICFTU told me that the report they gave to the TUC was detailed enough to start up British trade union action. The TUC says it was not. Allan Hargreaves told me that not enough information was provided about the production processes. Back to the ICFTU and, finally, this: "The TUC kept wanting more information even though it was difficult to obtain, even though time was pressing and even though it was clear to everyone that the workers were in a bad way."



The children of Sri Lanka tea plantation workers.

There are two postscripts to this saga, one ironic, the other perhaps sad.

There is the November 1973 issue of the ICFTU's "Free Labour World" magazine which reported that trade union battles against the tea companies in Sri Lanka would "help mark a historic turning point in international trade union efforts to mobilise an effective countervailing force to the power and influence of the multinational companies."

And the February, 1978, monthly bulletin of the Asian-American Free Labour Institute. It makes clear that the AFL-CIO is now strongly entrenched in Sri Lanka and working closely with the Ceylon Workers Congress, the union for the tea workers. Maybe the lesson is that Meany's machine will always be able to roll along happily in the Third World as long as the TUC and other western national centres abandon its peoples.

### Temporising on basic principles

A probable main reason why the Labour Party would like a seat on the TUC's international committee is the latter's policies over South Africa where the gap between a political and an economic approach causes sore feelings between the two.

It's hard for the South African labour movement to make sense of it all. One black trade union sent me a cutting from the Johannesburg Financial Mail, of March 29, 1974. Scrawled across it they had written: "What is the TUC up to? Is it out to act against apartheid or stabilise apartheid? Is it to show solidarity with South Africa's black workers or help control them?"

We reprint the article in full:

### It's softly, softly on SA

South Africa has an unlikely new friend in Britain — the TUC.

John Vorster, British companies in SA, and Tucsa can all heave a sigh of relief: the TUC's line following its visit here last October has turned out to be remarkably conciliatory. And there can be little doubt that it will help dampen growing pressures abroad for economic boycotts and stopping the inflow of foreign investment capital.

Some of its views are positively naive — for example, its apparent acceptance of an assurance (from whom?) that the banning of four White trade unionists in Durban two months ago had nothing to do with their trade union activities. And its hopeful assumption that the recently passed Affected Organisations Act (FM March 1) will not be used against Black trade unions is queried by some unionists in SA.

Radical trade unionists have already accused the TUC of selling out to apartheid. And, contrary to the TUC's attitude, Australia has already given notice that it will advocate tough economic blockades if the South African government does not undertake to recognise independent trade unions for African workers.

The TUC's proposals on SA (FM December 21, 1973) are to be discussed over the next fortnight by the British trade union movement, and in May, in Geneva, by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

The FM this week visited TUC headquarters in London to find out what its top officials were thinking.

FM: *It has been said that the ICFTU meeting will be an explosive one. Would you agree?*

TUC: There will certainly be boycott suggestions, notably from Australia, but they won't get very far. The TUC has decided that the only way to achieve its aims is to encourage people to work hard in SA, within the political framework, to promote Black trade unions.

We don't believe in economic blockade. Nor do most of the ICFTU's members.

FM: *One of your proposals is to mobilise sufficient funds to establish a "focal point" in SA to assist on a "massive scale" the organisation of African workers into trade unions. Part of this recommendation involves the employment of full-time Black organisers in several industrial centres.*

Do you not think the new *Affected Organisation Act*, designed to prohibit the flow of foreign funds to certain bodies, might not be invoked in your case?

TUC: We are assuming that this Act is not directed against *bona fide* organisations such as ours, but at people who are taking a direct and uncompromising line on organisations which prejudice the security of SA: Trade unions tend to be stabilising influences. So we don't believe we fall into this category.

FM: *What form will the "focal point" take?*

TUC: Anyone who thinks we're going to put up a building in Johannesburg and staff it with radical Europeans has got another think coming. The phrase "focal point" doesn't necessarily mean a TUC presence in SA.

On the contrary, there are many highly competent South Africans who could do the work we think should be done. Moreover, if we establish an office you can rest assured it will have been properly arranged at all levels.

FM: *You called for international support for the Black trade union movement in SA, proposing that a committee should raise £100,000 to promote it. Will the money be forthcoming?*

TUC: The money is available now from Europe. We have been working on it already through *ad hoc* committees. In fact, we had a

meeting on March 11 of Germany, the Scandinavian countries. The TUC and a representative of the ICFTU, to discuss the South African situation.

FM: *On the South African front, has there been any sign that the TUC has made an impact?*

TUC: Yes. These things happen slowly, but when an organisation like Leyland SA says "We are not against Black unions" and they have had pressure brought to bear on them by one it is highly significant.

FM: *Bodies like the ICFTU are all very well for academic discussion. But do you believe that debates on SA will ever mean anything more?*

TUC: The ICFTU is very largely a forum for discussion, not something which decides binding policy. But the South African problem has passed the stage we were at a short time ago when we were debating in a vacuum. We now have something tangible to work with.

FM: *Aren't members of the TUC delegation in for an attack from the ICFTU for selling out to SA?*

TUC: We don't really think so. There is a tendency for the radicals to say: "They're mistaken: but let them try." This is the impression we've been given and we're happy with it.

FM: *The TUC has taken quite a hard line proposing that opposition to British investment in SA should be continued unless firms operating in SA show, in a practical way, that they are encouraging and recognising independent Black trade unions. Will you hold this line?*

TUC: Most certainly, though we're not unaware of the tricky position some British firms are in. Nevertheless, we're looking to companies like Leyland which, though British, have largely South African management to set the example.

People like Basil Landau and Francois Jacobz, both Afrikaners, are on intimate terms with government and are therefore in a position to pioneer a move in the right direction.

FM: *You mention that you have been encouraged by some response to your proposals. But what about government's recent banning of four White unionists who were trying to organise Black unions? Surely you must find this dispiriting?*

TUC: We don't know why they were banned, but we've been assured it wasn't because they were trade unionists. Still, such bannings make life much more difficult for people like us, particularly if it's true that trade unionism wasn't the reason.

Trade unionists are certainly not above the law, but if we do something wrong we're entitled to know what it is, and to a fair trial in a court of law where everything can be brought into the open.

FM: *Don't you think the recent crippling strikes in Britain will have caused the South African government to have grave misgiving about encouraging Black trade unionism in the Republic, especially if the unions operate on a similar basis to yours?*

TUC: You can be perfectly sure that we don't and won't encourage strikes. A trade union's job is to settle, not strike. Our recent problems resulted from a government's reluctance to settle.

Some of your recent problems resulted from an employer, Philip Frame, being supported by the government, and that's why you had your strikes in Durban.

FM: *What advice would you present to the government in support of Black unions?*

TUC: One lesson they should have learnt is that they could have handled the strikes in

Durban far more efficiently if they'd been dealing with an organised movement, led by identifiable union men. Unless they recognise this, they'll have to operate in the dark again and again.

FM: *What about your attitude of antagonism towards White British workers who emigrate to SA?*

Don't you agree with Minister of Immigration, Piet Koornhof, and Trust Bank Chairman, Jan Marais, that one way of increasing the number of skilled Black workers in SA is by increasing the number of Whites who can train them?

TUC: We don't believe that manpower is the problem. Our visit showed us that lack of resources like trade schools and money were the principal factors. In any event, the Black workers are showing fast that they can take on skilled positions where they have to.

FM: *Isn't Britain's unemployment problem something which should be considered before you discourage emigration to SA?*

TUC: In normal circumstances, yes. But since you have such grave unemployment problems yourselves, we feel we must recognise, in this way, the prior right of the Black people to take a stake in SA industry.

FM: *Do you believe your campaign will be successful? Or is it simply a token gesture?*

TUC: If we can educate Black trade unionists to organise themselves effectively — and we believe we can since SA has the right material — then we believe success will automatically follow.

The TUC delegation to South Africa in October 1973 is widely considered, both in South Africa and in British trade union circles, to have been a diplomatic blunder. Even before its recommendations were made public there was an angry buzz in both countries.

In South Africa student organisations protested that the delegation was spending its time with "whites-only" trade unions, industrialists and government ministers. Harriet Bolton, leader of a multi-racial textile union told me how she and some of the members surrounded a reception for the delegates "so at least they would know that black trade unions existed."

The fuss was to continue at home. One member of the TUC international committee Audrey Prime, speaking at a meeting in London's Africa Centre in November, 1975, made an obvious reference to the delegation when she said: "It's a tragedy that some of the leading trade unionists have been playing footsie with the South African white trade unions."

The history of TUC delegations to South Africa has not been altogether happy. In 1953 a TUC delegation recommended that in the interests of unity both

sides — democratic and racist trade unions — should reach a compromise by “temporising on basic principles”. The TUC wanted both sides to agree that membership of the South Africa Trades and Labour Council be restricted to registered trade unions.

John Gaetsewe, European representative of the banned South Africa Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) recalled, “Africans were excluded from registered trade unions. It meant the TUC was supporting the exclusion of black workers.”

A year later, in 1954, the Labour Council did indeed do as the TUC recommended. It was dissolved and replaced by the whites-only Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA). In 1969 the ICFTU cut off all links with TUCSA and indeed, given its claim to a history of anti-colonialism, it is hard to see how it could have done otherwise. With the TUC, however, the picture is different and more complicated. The TUC still maintains informal contact with TUCSA in part for historical reasons and in part for constitutional reasons. The historical aspect is that for long enough they felt that TUCSA might open its doors to blacks and that it should keep in touch to encourage this. The other, as I understand it, is that they should keep in touch with TUCSA when they want information because “it is, after all, the national centre.”\*

Looked at through the eyes of black trade unionists, and indeed some whites who have joined forces with them, it's not hard to see why the TUC relationship with TUCSA can grate. They too had hopes that TUCSA might admit blacks, but



(Photo by Associated Press/TUC Library)

\*From a discussion with a TUC officer who presented his argument in such a way that I'm not altogether certain that I've understood all the reasons for the TUC's continued informal association with TUCSA.

these have been repeatedly dashed in recent years. For some the last straw came when TUCSA refused even to protest at the banning of four of their own people who had chosen to help the blacks organise in the aftermath of the Durban strikes in 1973.

Some have been upset by the TUC making contact with TUCSA following the Soweto uprisings to find out who had been arrested. The TUC inquiry was published in the South African press (South Africa Labour Mirror, December 1976) and the feeling was that this couldn't help but increase the credibility of TUCSA. Critics believe the TUC could have got the information from other sources.

If the TUC 1973 delegation caused upset, there is not much that can be said about the centrepiece of their resulting recommendations. It simply sunk like a stone. This was the idea that £100,000 be raised by the international trade union movement to try and create an African union centre. SACTU promptly responded: “Africans need the right to organise, not money . . . it has to be understood that the South African authorities would never tolerate an effective black trade union in that country, not even one financed from inside let alone financed from abroad.”

The TUC recommendation was later criticised as “pusillanimous” at a meeting of more than 50 union leaders from 23 Commonwealth and African countries attending an ILO conference.[2]

In 1973, the same year as the delegation, thousands of blacks went out on strike for increased wages and union recognition. The result, in an atmosphere of considerable white sympathy when their pay rates were publicised, was a relaxation of some of the more punitive labour laws and the creation, too, of a handful of trade union education centres for black workers.

Some, like the Institute of Industrial Education, Durban, attracted support from academics, sympathetic whites and black leaders. Others were smaller affairs, like one in Western province where workers would cram into a tin shed on wasteland before dashing home to beat curfew. Tolerated at first by the government it gave both the TUC and the ICFTU the means to be seen doing something. Both independently began funding some of this work with the TUC chipping in about £17,000. It was given for “straightforward training — no frills, and no politics”.

In the autumn of 1976 police began moving in on these centres. Some of the leadership was arrested, others were banned from taking part in meetings. The upshot was a call by the ICFTU to its affiliates to take part in a week of protest action in January, 1977 (repeated in March, 1978).

It was welcomed by South African blacks, but it was a fitful protest that never seemed likely to be the beginnings of a sustained campaign. The jam the Post Office Workers Union got itself into points to the reason.

General Secretary Tom Jackson called for a blockage of communication links to South Africa during the week. There was an embarrassingly cool response from the membership. It turned out that very few, if any, knew the first thing about the South African union centres being supported by the TUC and ICFTU. Even the union's own newspaper failed to carry a story about the centres



These two pictures were taken under difficult conditions. They show two forms of torture commonly applied to trade unionists in Uruguay and were taken by an Army officer disgusted, he says, by the maltreatment of prisoners and willing to risk the charge of treason by smuggling out these pictures to Amnesty International.

The picture on the facing page shows a form of torture called "the banner", and was taken when the prisoner had been suspended in this manner for three hours and under a fierce sun. Said the officer "He was undoubtedly left there for many more long hours."

The other photo (above) shows a form of torture called the "sawhorse". This consists of a metal bar with an edge on which prisoners are seated handcuffed and naked for hours with their feet hanging in the air.

"The only thing which has carried me through my nightmare", writes the officer, "is my profound faith that sooner or later the justice of God will come to my country."

It is the contention of this report that in important respects the Western trade union movement has been deprived of the means to support many such worker victims through its present-day international connections and indeed is associated with some of the causes of repression. (Photos courtesy Amnesty International)



during the previous year and nor that they were being helped with British trade union money. (The paper has since carried a double page spread on international work.)

Tom Jackson told me it was his worst time as union leader. He had never felt so much out of touch with his membership. He conceded the problem was lack of information. But that seems to be the case with all the western trade union international work and the consequences — as the week of action demonstrated — is that it cuts away at the opportunity for the trade union movement to exercise its real power, its ability to organise committed and widely based solidarity actions.

If these South African centres are finally extinguished or, indeed, if the AFL-CIO now moves in to snap them up with their cash leaving no space for those in the ICFTU orbit, just where will this leave the TUC? The 1975 TUC Congress voted for recognition of SACTU but the most this appears to mean is that SACTU representatives will have the chance of discussion with the TUC. It won't mean transfer of cash. Allan Hargreaves told me that in his opinion SACTU had no base in South Africa.

One possibility is that the TUC will do as before the centres were established, which really was very little at all. It seems that to justify solidarity actions over South Africa the ICFTU and TUC need a trade union connection there. In the meantime all those who have helped keep alive some hope, like the black consciousness movement or the SACTU people working underground, will be denied the chance of official western trade union support. It fits the global pattern where for the best, and often the cruelest, reasons the real and representative peoples' movements are denied the right of open existence and in turn denied the solidarity of the western trade union movements.

Seeking out a more positive, and perhaps fairer, view of the TUC's response toward growing worker and peasant repression, I sought out the views of Marie Patterson, TGWU national officer and member of the international committee. She said they regularly went to foreign embassies to protest about worker persecution. A TUC officer elaborated on this, saying that the Foreign Office link was useful in these cases and had been found so productive that the ICFTU also sometimes made use of the Foreign Office for the same reason.

There is a possible flaw in this. With few exceptions — and action on behalf of members of the banned Chilean CUT is one of these — the TUC and ICFTU only take action when it is one of their affiliates under attack. The snag is, of course, that they're not likely to be among the first to be at the sharp end of government or company action.

The ICFTU 1969 Congress reported, for instance, that their Peruvian affiliate, the Confederation of Peruvian Workers (CTF) had been under constant attack from Christian and "Communist" unions. It had called for a general strike against the military government but, reported the ICFTU, at the time of writing the CTF did not seem to have any major difficulties in operating.

Typically, no explanation is given about why they were under attack from other unions or why, indeed, they had called a general strike.

What would have happened if the government had taken action against

them? Presumably the TUC and ICFTU would have felt impelled to protest, perhaps using Foreign Office machinery. But it was a government trying to introduce wide-ranging land reform measures that "our" affiliate was trying to cripple. Just who then would we be extending our solidarity toward?

There are, of course, examples of unions in other countries trying to respond in a more vigorous fashion than the TUC. The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) held up more than 50 million dollars of wheat shipments to Chile for over two years by simply banning all union transport and loading of the goods consigned to the Santiago Junta. Yet, incredibly, at a recent trade union meeting in Algeria an ACTU delegate complained that while the government was stepping up pressure on them to lift the boycott the union didn't know if it was still wanted by the Chilean people. "It just goes to show you" said one participant "what a job there is to be done in putting workers' movements together and getting some exchange of information going."

### Bibliography to Chapter 9

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Can we be so sure that trade union failures to give solidarity help to the Third World poor doesn't reflect a failure to assist our own poor?

## Chapter 10

**"I don't think the multinationals have got much to worry about yet from the international labour movement."**  
Confederation of British Industry spokesman, 1977.

With vast resources to employ, big business is now the most powerful lobby in the UN orbit.

Their influence is increasingly evident. At the 1974 UN World Food Conference, for instance, meeting to discuss the threat of starvation hanging permanently over 800 million souls, the biggest single delegation came from private business.

Their strength lies in the connecting business lobbies putting pressure on politicians before they arrive at the UN and other international gatherings. The workers' group at the ILO, by contrast, appears to operate in a limbo with no connecting trade union pressure groups operating from the home base.

In 1973 the UN set up an "Eminent Persons" group to study the activities of the multinationals. Despite all the ICFTU's work in this field, hugely benefiting from their connection with the ITSS, the UN didn't bother to give a seat to a trade unionist.

Recounting this experience at a South East Asia conference\* an incredulous Charles Ford, General Secretary of the Textile Garment and Leather Workers Federation told how, when a complaint was made to a UN official, he replied: "I didn't know you were interested."

Later, the UN was to set up at 16-man "Profound Persons" advisory group on multinationals. It was so heavily loaded with businessmen that Third World countries successfully appealed it shouldn't be permitted to report to the General Assembly.

The CBI was to acknowledge to me that trade unionists were poorly represented on the advisory group and Third World workers' leaders "hardly at all."

Today it looks as though big business is running circles round the workers' group. A 1977 ICFTU development workshop plaintively complained that MNCs had now penetrated UN agencies to an extent that is illegal.\*\* They cited, in particular, penetration of the Food and Agricultural Organisation.

Professor Everett Kassalow, an acknowledged expert on MNCs, recounts how when he asked questions about international labour machinery at one European employers federation "they were sharply critical. They had a host of reasons, some of them philosophical and some practical. Several of them claimed the unions were too nationalistic." [1]

\*From "MNCs and the trade unions", transcript of an ITGLWF seminar, Djakarta, Indonesia.

\*\*Quoted in ICFTU draft development charter, amended version, May 1977.



Tim Healy of the CBI told me: "there are a lot of problems with workers' international solidarity. There is a lot of talk about it, but the reality is different."

"The multinationals worry about the prospect of international collective bargaining, but it will be a long time coming."

"We can see the problems that exist within international labour channels, so we don't have to worry unduly at this stage. One major difficulty is that national trade union centres are still unwilling to relinquish their traditional role of negotiating wages and hesitate to permit the ITSs to enter the field of international collective bargaining. Unilever is an example. I think it's fair to say that the multinationals are quite happy with this situation."

He thought the prospects of worker solidarity with their Third World counterparts was even further off, "certainly in times of economic stress workers, wherever they are, tend to think only of themselves and in times of widespread economic depression, I suspect Third World workers come off worst because they lack the strength at UN level."

Healy added: "This gives freedom of action to multinationals in the Third World that they might not similarly enjoy in the developed world."

Meanwhile Kenneth Walker, formerly of the International Institute of Labour, has been quoted as saying that in the development of collective bargaining, management "tries to slow down any tendency for personnel and industrial relations to transnationalise." [2]

In Britain it looks as though there's not much need for management to try and slow down anything. The TUC appears to be doing the job for them. Confronted by a mass of evidence that, like private industry, the trade unions will only obtain global change by first putting pressure on their own domestic governments and businesses the TUC continues to wash its hands of this strategy arguing that they pay the ICFTU to get on with this job.

An ICFTU staff member retaliates: "You tell me how we can bring pressure to bear from Brussels on the British government or companies who've been paying starvation wages in South Africa and elsewhere? It's got to happen from inside the country. We can give the TUC information but it's up to them to decide whether or not to use it."

If the logic of that argument is inescapable (and one member of the TUC international committee nodded his head when I put it to him) it immediately poses a problem for the TUC and probably for their European counterparts too. Any home based strategy would have to involve the general membership, but the whole apparatus and underlying psychology is characterised by a reluctance to involve the rank and file.

When I asked Allan Hargreaves if there was any chance of some of their government cash, given for overseas work, being used to provide information to British workers about international issues so they could get involved in solidarity actions, he dismissed the idea. He said that could best be left to Third World charities like my own. This report is a first contribution towards that end but, at the same time, it's an inquiry that repeatedly demonstrated how difficult — if not impossible — it is for ordinary workers to get hold of information.



"PITY THEY NEVER LAST LONG ENOUGH TO  
TRY OUR INSTANT COFFEE"

A cartoon used as part of War on Want's campaign against the Third World promotional methods of Western baby food companies. The trade union leadership seems either reluctant, or unable, to use their power to combat the MNCs.

### The impasse

One member of the international committee, for instance, wrote to committee Chairman Jack Jones begging him to meet with me. Jones wrote in September, 1977, to say that he was "naturally anxious to clear the name of the TUC, but in fairness it seems to me that this is much more the direct responsibility of the full-time staff led by Len Murray."

It should be said that in the opinion of some inside observers the appointment of Jack Jones as international committee Chairman "has seen some remarkable changes begin to take place."

Allan Hargreaves meanwhile told me that he was perfectly capable of dealing with all questions of policy. In November, 1977, members of the TUC international committee were instructed not to meet with me.

Peering in from the outside it seems a hopeless impasse is taking place. For the last decade and more the TUC has groaned and worried about having to regularly increase its subscription to the ICFTU until now it amounts to about a third of their total budget. Yet the repeated trade union failures at the UN and elsewhere in the face of MNC incursions irresistibly suggest that without action at home, its money gone largely to waste.

The workers group at the ILO, for instance, has been brought to the point of despair by failure to stop government incarceration and torture of workers. At first glance the answer would seem to be to threaten to withhold UN aid to these countries. A UN official hastily assures you that it's not possible: "Look at the problems we had when this action was suggested for Uganda."

The same barriers don't exist when it comes to campaigning against British government aid — the miners' action over Bolivia proved that. Except, of course, the TUC doesn't seem in the slightest bit interested.

Others outside the TUC could undertake this campaigning work — just as in Holland, for instance, there is a lively rank and file support group for the CLAT union members in Latin America\* — provided, of course, the necessary information was given to them in the first place.

But even here there seems to be another extraordinary kind of bottleneck. The ICFTU, by protocol and practice, appears unable to have direct contact with individual unions or any rank and file action group. All approaches have to be made via the TUC and presumably the same is true in other countries.

This kind of institutional sclerosis massively adds to the alleged "air of mystery" hanging over the ICFTU. It's hard to see just who is accountable for what's done overseas in our name. As this inquiry progressed, it was clear that some TUC people were anxious to shift blame on to the ICFTU, as though they themselves weren't a major part of this organisation. Now what would happen if a British national union decided to ask an ICFTU official to attend their annual conference to give their point of view and generally explain their overseas work?

\*A striking example of the Dutch CLAT support group's potency came in 1975 when War on Want told them about trade unionists being imprisoned, tortured and killed in a central-America country. Within a few days the support group had secured their release by raising a fuss at the appropriate embassy and bombarding the country concerned with telegraphs of protest.

Would it be blocked — or what? And if it was blocked would someone from the TUC agree to come along instead and make themselves accountable?

Professor Richard Jolly of Sussex University, like others outside the official structures, seems perplexed by what has been going on. Speaking at a 1976 meeting organised by Liberation to discuss the UN "New Economic Order", he said about UN dealings with the Third World: "I have seen too much cynicism, too much neglect on the British side. How can we get the labour movement to take these issues seriously?"

### The British Leyland issue

In 1976, the Guardian exposed the number of British firms in South Africa who paid wages below the poverty datum line. It also found that these firms were resisting efforts to form black trade unions. In the same year at British Leyland's South Africa, Durban, plant a bitter struggle started up after the African workers there, members of the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) asked the department of labour and management to recognise their work committee.

Leyland refused to talk to the union, or negotiate with the works committee. Instead they tried to foist a liaison committee on them bringing in head office and government representatives as persuaders. The workers turned in blank ballots for the liaison committee elections and stuck out for representation by MAWU. When it was refused they went on strike. It was declared illegal by both Leyland and the South African government. The strikers were dismissed.

Finally, after negotiations with MAWU, and apparent agreement on granting de facto recognition to in-plant union work, the strikers were allowed to return. Over 60, however, were then dismissed, including four of the six elected shop stewards, on the pretext of a shortage of supplies caused by Leyland strikes in the UK.

The workers at the British end could have pointed out this was nonsense (those who remained in the Durban plant had to work overtime) and done a good deal more besides. During this critical period, however, through lack of information or lack of contact between them, the British workers failed to move.

This isn't an uncommon episode and numerous similar examples could be given of failure by other unionists to help their brothers overseas, only because they didn't know; but in this particular case it was presaged by a revealing opinion poll at the British Leyland plant on worker attitudes to South Africa.

Undertaken by two trade union researchers Brian Bolton and Margaret Ling, it was an admittedly small sampling of opinion (only 54 replies were received out of a possible 334) but of value nonetheless in view of the conflict that was about to erupt at the South African end.

The majority did think something needed doing about British firms in South Africa and also that British workers should try and do something.

About 20 felt that Britain had no responsibility, some arguing that the problems of a declining living standard in Britain had to come first. Here are some of the latter's replies: "If they cannot negotiate for their own terms that is too bad. British workers had to start from scratch and have had to fight the bosses; they must learn to do the same."

A typical example of Third World appeals  
for Western worker solidarity —



Phone : 21-2457

WEST BENGAL COMMITTEE  
CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

53 Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose Road, Calcutta - 16

President : MD. ISMAIL, M. P.

General Secretary : MONORANJAN ROY, M. P.

Date : January 31, 1976

The General Secretary  
Trade Union Congress  
'Congress House'  
Great Russell Street  
LONDON - WC1B 3LS  
U.K.

Dear Comrade,

Re: Struggle of the workers of Ritz  
Continental Hotel, Calcutta.

Retrenchment of 32 women workers

We are sending herewith a copy of our circular covering an appeal for solidarity support for the struggling workers of Ritz Continental Hotel, Calcutta. You will find all details from the circular.

We also enclose a group photograph of 22 women workers out of 32 who have been retrenched. These women come from the most depressed section of the Anglo-Indian Community in Calcutta.

We hope, if will be possible for your organisation and all your affiliated unions to extend solidarity support to these struggling workmen.

With greetings,

Yours fraternally,

  
( S. S. Bose )  
Secretary

but how many of these appeals  
ever meet with success?

"I'm sure that we have enough to do with our own living standards without studying the politics of Mr. Vorster's system. South Africa is rich isn't it?"

"The union should educate a few black unionists on how to run a union on modern lines and how to negotiate with employers about wages, conditions, holidays, etc."

"It has been their unwillingness over the centuries to help themselves that has got them in their present situation. After all they were in touch with civilisation long before the British."

"If the employees in South Africa are not satisfied they should strike."

"About time the workers in South Africa did something about it, as our forefathers had to do."

It is true that these are minority responses, but Bolton and Ling were also to conclude about the replies from those who did want to see British action, that many did not appreciate the full extent of the political and legislative oppression of the South African labour movement.

It raises a question. Would there have been a different response, and would British Leyland have been able to act as they did, if the British shop stewards at Leyland had contact and shared information with their MAWU counterparts in South Africa? And another question — do the present trade union bureaucracies want to encourage such links?

The CBI has its own view. Talking about an attempted worker action at the British Pilkington Company over the sacking of 22 fellow workers in the South African subsidiary a spokesman said: "There wasn't much worker sympathy for it. You see, workers think of themselves first. It's human nature isn't it?"

### The muddles

Some labour officials are inclined to paint a picture of their international work being a victim of historic forces, but there's another side to our history that is too easily forgotten and which fully answers this CBI response and those among our trade union leadership who are content with things as they are.

Following the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, Republican leaders issued numerous appeals for help to British workers. It was to be many months before the latter responded. A breakthrough came with a simple act by Dr. Charles Brook, Secretary of the Socialist Medical Association. He approached some trade unionists with an idea that they could send out some medical supplies. A meeting was held in London and the Spanish Medical Aid Committee was formed. Their work, and the information they received from Spain, helped to lift the labour movement out of its apathy.

God knows there are numerous similar struggles taking place in the Third World. On my desk, for instance, is a report of how the Tangwena people of Zimbabwe were forced to flee into neighbouring Mozambique. They refused to move off their ancestral homeland when it was designated for whites only. Smith's police swooped down on them kidnapping their children, now scattered in various orphanages and boarding schools. The Tangwena, skilled farmers, are now struggling with barely any tools in the "guerrilla" camps to grow food for their fellow refugees, many of them ill with hunger.

Maybe in a genuine programme of worker solidarity some tools would have been sent to them, but unlike the present money-dominated structures, it might have had the chance, like the Spanish episode before it, to fill out into sharing of information and then real solidarity so that the British and European trade union movements could at long last be seen standing alongside the freedom struggles of the African workers and peasants.

The present wilderness was marked out at a 1976 trade union conference called by Liberation. Not one of the over seventy delegates present could offer an example of rank and file links with Third World counterparts in the same parent firm. Sam McCluskie, National Union of Seamen official, finally declared: "Trade Union internationalism is a bit of a hollow statement."

### Selling out with standing orders

When I met Marie Patterson, TGWU national officer, member of the TUC international committee (before members were barred from meeting with me), she struggled to recall a recent example of successful union action for the Third World. She thought most had failed. She remembered, however, that her own union had officially boycotted the off-loading of Californian grapes in the late sixties to support the recognition struggle of the mainly Mexican migrant workers of the United Farm Workers Union (UFWU).

It was the London dockers, however, without instruction from above, who slapped on this boycott. Sought out by UFWU representative Elaine Ellinson (now Nicholson) they took over from there. She told me afterwards: "It can only be done if you give workers the information and let them make up their minds for themselves."

If one woman with enough grit to stop around dockland can achieve this it makes odder — and more significant — the failures like a more recent effort by the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (AUEW) to get their members to boycott Chilean ships. It fizzled out through lack of support.

The muddles continue. The General and Municipal Workers Union (GMWU) is still involved in a campaign to retain cane sugar jobs here and in the Caribbean while the Agricultural Workers Union is demanding increased sugar beet production at home to help keep their members in work. One of their officials said: "Yes, it's a bit embarrassing that we're in conflict but what can we do?"

And it's compounded by the current global recession and fears of unemployment. British print unions — unlike those in New York — have rejected appeals to stop printing South Africa job advertisements so that blacks there will have a greater chance of work. Job fears also put an end to a Marconi worker effort to block the sale of defence equipment to South Africa.

The TUC's own standing orders meanwhile hardly ring with determination to build up global solidarity and fight exploitation. It reads (Rule 8, F): "They [the TUC] shall also enter into relations with trade unions and labour movements in our countries with a view to united action."

But against what? And towards what? That same standing order was angrily read out to me at the TUC in such a way that I could only suppose it was meant

to justify everything that has happened, and is still happening, overseas in our name.

During the 1955 AFL-CIO merger convention Art Preis, correspondent for the Socialist paper "Militant", spotted that a preamble from the old AFL constitution had been quietly dropped. It read: "A struggle is taking place in all nations of the world between the oppressors and the oppressed of all countries, a struggle between the capitalists and the labourers, which grows in intensity from year to year, and will work disastrous results to the toiling millions if they are not combined for mutual protection and benefit."

In its place was a summons not to fight bosses, but to "protect the labour movement from any and all corrupting influence and from the undermining efforts of Communist agencies and any others who are opposed to the basic principles of democracy and free trade unionism."

After the merger Art Preis drily observed that the AFL leadership was still prevaricating over the issue of equal rights to black trade unionists. They also, he said, remained reluctant to spend cash on education and recruitment drives at home.

Yet this same leadership was to go on to pour millions of dollars into "education" in the Third World.

Is it just coincidence that the 1977 TUC Conference, after racing through the international session with barely a word about the African liberation struggle, should minutes later vote down the idea of a minimum wage for our own poor, many of whom are on or below the poverty line?

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## Chapter 11

"Ten thousand times has the labour movement stumbled and fallen and bruised itself, and risen again; been seized by the throat and choked into insensibility; enjoined by courts, assaulted by thugs, charged by militia, shot down by regulars, traduced by the press, frowned upon by public opinion, deceived by politicians, threatened by priests, repudiated by renegades, preyed upon by grafters, infested by spies, deserted by cowards, betrayed by traitors, bled by leeches, and sold out by leaders, but, not withstanding all this, and all these, it is today the most vital potential power this planet has ever known, its historic mission of emancipating the workers of the world from the thralldom of the ages is as certain of ultimate realisation as the rising of the sun." Eugene V. Debs "The Metalworkers" May, 1904.

I remember a flag hanging on the wall of my local Labour Party carried by volunteers who fought with the Spanish republicans. I recall a speaker telling us how Lancashire dockers refused to handle boats for the American South during the civil war.

These and other fragments of history have been strung together to add up to an apparently continuing tradition helping give labour a sense of moral ascendancy over its opponents. The current reality, far from being a cause for pride, is cause for despair.

The present union international structures are now so atomized, complex and estranged from ordinary workers that it has become almost impossible to understand what is going on, let alone be lifted by it. The time may now be upon us, if reports of a recent German I G Metall conference are accurate, where union conferences, platforms bedecked with banners proclaiming the idea of international solidarity, will meet for two or perhaps three days and yet barely discuss the conditions and struggles of their fellow workers overseas.

What we will be left with instead is a glimmer of trade union bureaucracies throughout the world who, in foreign affairs, act in step and resemble the industrial and state bureaucracies as one drop of water does another.

From top to bottom union internationalism now drips with cynicism. John Miller, national officer at the TGWU, for instance, was to tell me it was "all Foreign Office and CIA."\*

\*Miller didn't elaborate but in 1976 and 1977 standing unsuccessfully for the position of TGWU General Secretary, he called for changes in trade union internationalism.

It soaks up through to the ILO, the one global body trade unionists can use to curb worker repression and, indeed, if one last example is needed to illustrate the real-politics of our "non-political" internationalism, then the current fracas at the ILO is as good an illustration as any.

This tripartite organisation, its governing board comprising 28 government, 14 worker and 14 employer representatives, has built up a pile of codes and conventions to protect workers, like freedom of association and abolition of forced labour. The idea is to get governments to sign these conventions and then get them to stick to them. Often enough, however, they sign and then promptly ignore the conventions. The only recourse open to the workers' side, dominated by ICFTU representatives, is to apply moral pressure. Sometimes it works. Some government representatives have been known to cable home "before the matter is taken up before the whole world". Others simply ignore public censure.

ILO machinery, however, has been constipated by arguments over the human rights question. The US delegation, led by Irving Brown, has been in the forefront of this battle constantly provoking divisions with calls for more drastic action on the human rights issue in Eastern Europe.

A major casualty is the human rights of the mass of mankind on the underside of the globe. It's a measure of the way the ILO has been sucked into this tribal conflict that it was only, finally, in 1975 that comprehensive conventions were introduced to try and protect the mass of rural labour in the Third World. Numerous countries, however, have still to implement these conventions. It's a problem compounded by the attempts to domesticate the leadership of Third World unions and use them as weapons in this East-West conflict.

During 1975 and 1976, for instance, some Third World union leadership made polite noises when the US came to them seeking support for a threatened US walkout from the ILO on the grounds that the organisation was "too political". They were barely in a position, say some observers, to oppose it.

The US walkout finally took place in November 1977 depriving the organisation of a quarter of its income and some of its staff.

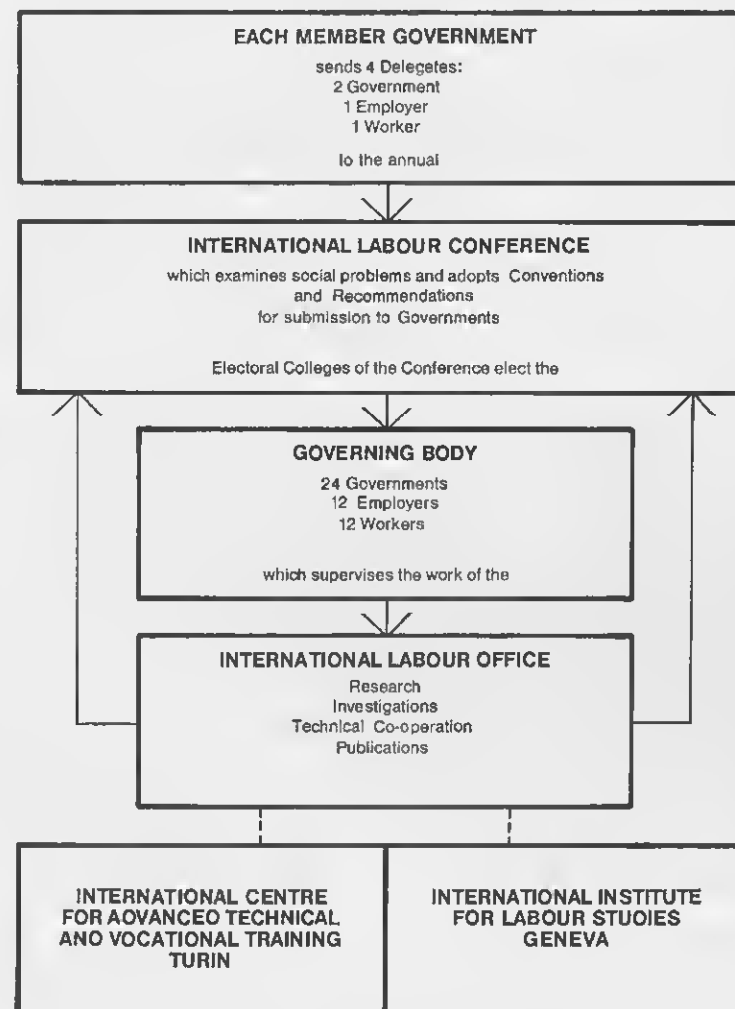
There is a good deal of British and European union sympathy with the US complaints but this is inclined to give way to despair when the result of a 1977 US Government study on the ILO is made known to them.

Prepared by the Comptroller General (US equivalent to a Government Inspector) it was released days after Irving Brown was telling the American Federation of Teachers that the ILO had no right to be involved in politics. Human rights was its job.

The report told a different story.[1] It confirmed that the US should be seeking new ways inside the ILO "for the promotion of free enterprise philosophy and protection of foreign and domestic interests of the US." One of the unstated reasons, continued the report, for the US establishing the ILO "was to combat radicalism in the labour unions." The same report also states that the ILO "has always been a very political organisation."

Just as the US walked out of the ICFTU and built up its own independent programmes the same pattern seems to be emerging following their departure from the ILO. Tell-tale signs of increased US labour and government activity in

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Latin America now point to US plans to set up a western hemispheric parallel organisation to duplicate, and perhaps seriously harm, the work of the ILO.[2]

The intention appears to be to change the structure of the Organisation of American States (OAS) to contain nominees from that area who would purport to represent workers, management and governments. It could be accompanied by the attempted creation of a new labour federation.

Research Associates International considers the last important enough to undertake a separate inquiry now in progress. So far the evidence seems to indicate that the AFL-CIO is trying to co-opt CLAT leaders in one or two countries in an attempt to obtain more credibility. There have been similar past attempts to subvert CLAT personnel. They have nearly all been unsuccessful and in the rare cases when it has happened—such as Chile after the coup—CLAT moved to expel their people who went along with Pinochet's captive yellow labour front.

There is a considerable amount of evidence that an important element in this possible plan of a new federation would be based around activity with the Argentinian and Chilean unions. In fact the unions that the AFL-CIO and State Department have been meeting with in the Argentine are those unions that have been officially 'intervened'—i.e. under direct control of General Videla's military junta.

Further supporting evidence is the fact that US government aid to these unions is increasing. This is partially in conflict with the AFL-CIO's apparent tradition of remaining aloof from moderate and conservative Peronist trade unions (although in fact certain Argentinian trade union leaders and unions have been receiving overt and covert US money for a decade or more).

The overall effect, however, may be to crack open the cynicism that has prevailed for so many years in the European basin. Jean Bruck's testimony, given for the purpose of this report, may encourage similar revelations and at long last the beginning of a fight back.

Both Irving Brown and Lane Kirkland, Meany's heir-apparent, are anxious to forestall this possibility. At the February 1978 AFL-CIO Executive both pressed for a return to the ICFTU and expressed concern about the dangers of isolation from the mainstream of western labour following their departure from the ILO. Meany played the carrot and stick game. He wanted the prospect of a US return to be used as a lever to get the European trade union movements to drop their eastern European contacts. While it is unlikely they will do so, it is thought this argument might carry some weight with ICFTU Third World affiliates.

The likelihood is that a US return to the ICFTU will come sooner than later and is certainly expected following Meany's retirement in 1979. It is certain that both before and after any reaffiliation there will be a quid pro quo agreement struck with each agreeing not to criticise the other's work. The chance to open up the underlying issues will diminish accordingly. It is likely that even the renewed prospect of a US return will already help stifle criticisms.

When the AFL-CIO, for instance, was discussing the reaffiliation question War on Want wrote to Len Murray, TUC General Secretary, seeking an

assurance that there would be no unconditional return and that it would be presaged by open debate about the implications of a return. He replied that War on Want had been in contact with the TUC on several occasions, "and I do not think we can be of any further help to you." (April 3, 1978).

It is known that the TUC, while favouring a US return, is pinning its hopes on some of the recently elected and younger members of the AFL-CIO Executive.

If this report has dwelt overlong on the AFL-CIO's foreign policy it should be said it seems almost impossible to enter into discussion about the British and European programmes without the AFL-CIO coming to the fore, indicated by this extract from the March, 1978, bulletin of the International Union of Food and Allied Workers Association: "The possibility of a return of the AFL-CIO to the ICFTU assumes a very great importance and raises many questions. For what purpose and what agenda could the AFL-CIO return? Would the relationship between the ICFTU and European Trade Union Confederation not require redefinition? Would the AFL-CIO institutes continue bilateral activity at a level and in a context that is inconsistent with serious international commitment? On the answers to these and other questions hinge much of the future prospects for world labour."

There is another justifying reason to dwell on the nature of the AFL-CIO independent Third World programmes. The same issue of the bulletin voiced what has now become common rumour, that the AFL-CIO plans to start up a fourth independent programme, this time for Europe. If it materialises, we may well find we have a common interest with the Third World poor.

That being said the cause for greatest concern seems not the US programme but the spiritual and policy vacuum that resides at the heart of the British and European structures. The straining to separate away the political from the economic, the related obsequiousness to the US machine, the failure and fear to come clean about their overseas programmes, all point to us unknowingly being made part of this imperialist pattern.

Trade union rights are everyone's rights. Divide or weaken a Third World union and you help pave the way for wholesale oppression. This is the incalculable wickedness that has sometimes been visited upon the poor of the earth in the name of trade union solidarity. The manner of it deserves to figure in our trade union debates where the spread of dictatorships is at least putting the Third World back on the agenda. Without some questioning about the direction of our own western trade union aid, we will be in no shape to adopt moral postures about overseas worker oppression.

### Some questions

It's the invariable logic of overseas aid that the donor organisation creates in its own image. The result is that trade union bureaucracies have been spawned in many Third World countries, making it difficult to envisage an easy path towards the idea of genuine worker international exchange. Nor is it altogether easy to see how the idea of global trade union unity, most often advanced by the Communists,

will help us arrive at this idea even if a merging of all three internationals was possible.

As things stand it would be akin to a merger of banks with the customers none the wiser. Just what would it do for worker to worker relations?

Who spoke up for the Egyptian workers and city poor when they were attacked by Sadat? Or for the Rumanian miners when they came out on strike? Or for the unionists in Thailand when the military returned?

Maybe a younger generation, angry and aware about the dramatic poverty of much of mankind and longing to see a scaling down of our institutions, will choose another road. Spotting the connection between the international structures and the state of union democracy at home — for surely the abuse of the first is dependent upon the suppression of the second — they will instead concentrate, each of them in their own country, on wondering aloud about the role of their own union leadership and national centres.

There are, for instance, some questions that could usefully be put to the TUC hierarchy:

Can you say hand on heart that our Western hemispheric regional wing, ORIT, isn't under US control and that it hasn't been associated with the downfall of democratic governments?

Is it really possible that despite being a major subscriber to the ICFTU — with both Len Murray and Jack Jones on its Executive — the TUC can really claim that they have little influence over ICFTU spending policy?

Can it be true that the TUC doesn't always know how ICFTU money is spent overseas when among their members on the TUC International Committee is Fireman's leader Terry Parry, an auditor for the ICFTU?

Just how much control is exercised over TUC international policy by the General Council and International Committee? When last, for instance, did either fully debate ICFTU spending policy and not just worry about the ICFTU's running costs?

Why does the International Committee have to comprise all union bosses who often enough, according to one member, Postman's leader, Tom Jackson, don't have the time to go into things properly?

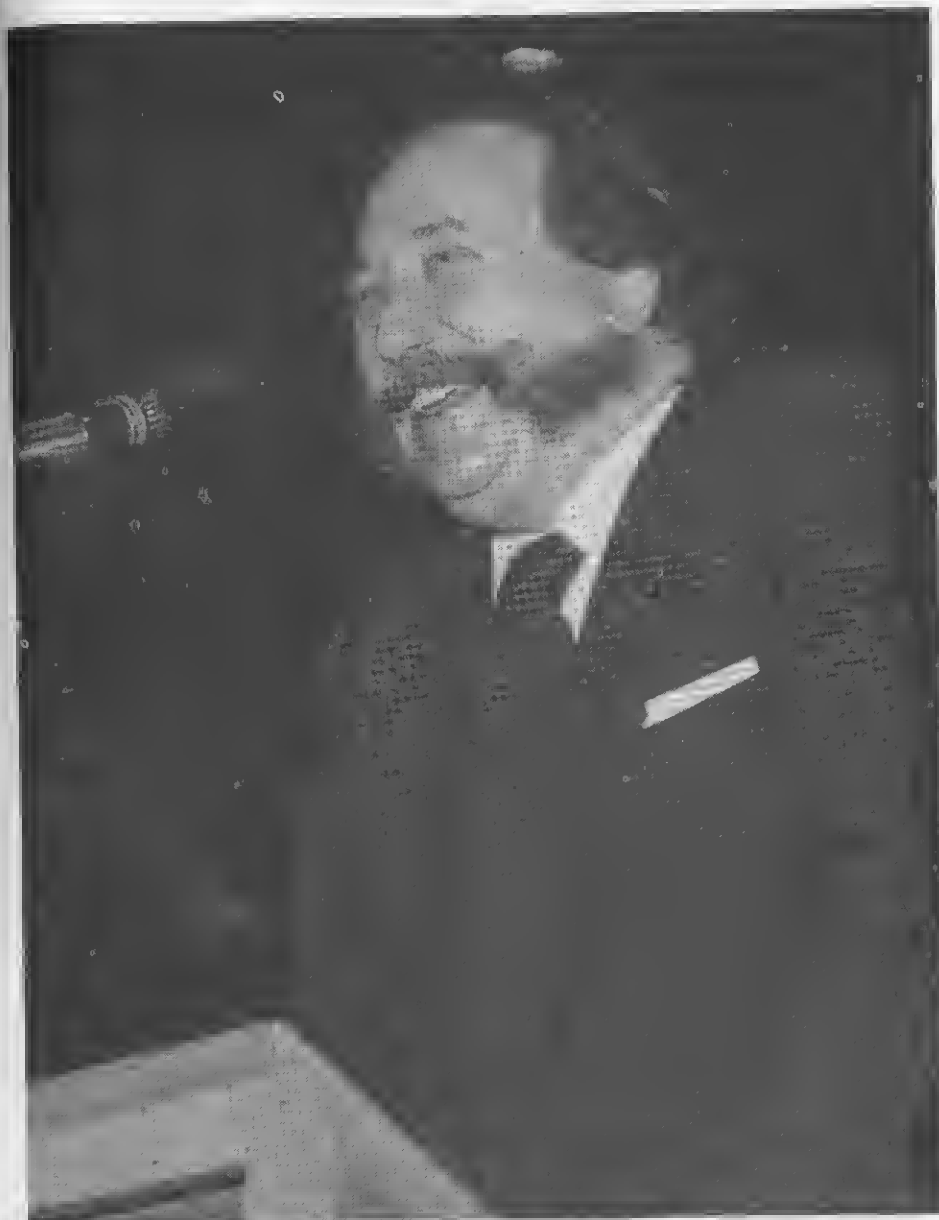
If, as one officer argued, the present bureaucratic international exchange often makes it impossible to link with overseas worker struggles, then just how much do they try to pass on and publicise information so that ordinary workers, national unions or International Trade Secretariats are encouraged to undertake the necessary action?

Will the TUC — and indeed the ICFTU — make available details of all who receive their overseas funding and why?

Will the TUC agree to fully debate the implications of an AFL-CIO return to the ICFTU before giving their assent to such a move?

What exactly is going on between the TUC and Foreign Office?

Why is the TUC not trying to influence government aid directing it away, for instance, from repressive regimes and toward the needs and struggles of the poor as the British miners found possible to do in Bolivia?



Tom Jackson, General Secretary of the Union of Post Office Workers and TUC International Committee member. He says members of the committee, because they are all union leaders, don't have the time to go deeply into international work. "The only time I get a chance to read the relevant documents is when I'm in the car going to International committee meetings."



The Miners International Federation (MIF) has avoided criticism of overt or covert involvement with aspects of the US labour programme in the Third World. Its veteran General Secretary, Denis Edwards, refuses to accept other sources of funding apart from that of his own membership. He says, "The TUC used to be the most advanced for ideas in the world. Now they're retreating from the world."

Why is it left up to charities and newspapers to expose British company maltreatment of Third World labour when, through the ICFTU, we're meant to have a global exchange of worker information?

Why isn't the TUC, like its counterparts in say Holland or Belgium, trying to encourage shop floor interest and get action going against multinational Third World exploitation at the place where it would count — at factory floor level in the home base of these companies?

Finally, what is to be made of Jack Jones' statement at the 1975 ICFTU Congress that future Congresses should comprise at least 50 percent rank and file delegates? What possible meaning can it have if rank and file participation isn't encouraged in the TUC's own international work?

If questions of this kind aren't answered, then the time may be right for the rank and file to make calls on their own union leadership to withhold part of the annual subscription to the TUC in proportion to the amount the TUC expends on international work.

The need for an alternative programme to spring up from outside the bureaucracies becomes clear when you examine the room for manoeuvre open to the union leadership as a result of the constitutional and historic problems facing them.

Some observers, for instance, believe that in constitutional terms the ICFTU would have enormous difficulty in dropping ORIT and can't envisage such a vote taking place at an ICFTU conference, in part because ORIT represents such a substantial part of their Third World membership. It is also the case that the prospect of opening up a vacuum in the western hemisphere would be frightening to people embedded in constitutional proprieties and wedded to the idea of properly constituted regional wings, no matter how unreal in practice. There would also be a reluctance, because of past rivalries, to open up space for the CLAT federation of trade unions.

Within the existing framework, about the most that could be achieved would be a tightening up of the ICFTU credentials committee, and with it a harder look at the nature of some of their affiliates. To some extent this appears to be happening with the decision to suspend their Paraguay affiliate, to be followed with a similar announcement about two other Latin America national centres.

The historic problems emerge most clearly when examining attitudes toward an AFL-CIO return. There is no question that many trade union leaders can't abide the AFL-CIO overseas programme. They point out, however, that — again in constitutional terms — it would be hard to see how the ICFTU could provide good reason for barring what, after all, is the west's most powerful national trade union centre.

Whatever way you look at it, the future being held out looks like no future at all and, indeed, there are some prominent trade union officials who take this view. Alan Sapper, General Secretary of the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians, and TUC General Council member, is one. He told me he would like to see the TUC simply making a clean break from the ICFTU.

There's an air of defeat everywhere. The TUC leadership, apparently

wearied of the ICFTU problems, is now putting more energy into the European Trade Union Confederation, started in 1973, to allow for a trade union voice inside the Common Market structures. Hollowed out of the substance of the ICFTU, its 35 affiliates include the Communist led Italian General Confederation of Labour (CGIL). While it is true that the TUC and others have tried to make use of this confederation to get government action on aspects of Third World worker oppression, by definition it remains a regional bloc. It looks as though it's going to be down to the rank and file to break through these bureaucratic shells if we're ever going to have any real global worker solidarity on this small planet of ours.

### Ways forward?

The genesis of a worker response to these problems is beginning to emerge as a result of the repeated failures of the trade union bureaucracies to curb the MNCs. In 1973, the ICFTU produced a charter[3] for action on multinationals but no recommendation, predictably, involved a possible opening for rank and file involvement. There have since then, however, been flashes of independent worker action. In Holland, for instance, the small SOSV organisation (Trade Union Foundation for Co-operation in Development) has been encouraging Dutch workers in multinational plants to make contact with their Third World counterparts.

The result, in one case, was a successful strike at the Dutch Phillips plant in support of a wage claim by their Colombia counterparts and, in another, a massive and successful vote of rejection by workers in the Estel plant against the company's plans to invest in South Africa. Today about fifty groups, numbering altogether about 400 people, are centred round their respective industries, gathering and sharing information with their Third World counterparts. It remains to be seen whether the incorporation of SOSV into the Confederation of the Netherlands Trade Union Movement (FNV) will hinder or help this movement.

Also in Holland, the Industrial Workers Union (Industriebond NVV) has spotlighted not just the problem of the divisions of the various ITSs, but the way, increasingly, their existence contradicts the movement for trade union combinations at shop floor level.

Talking about the trade union response to MNCs, executive board member Bert van Hatten says: "The trade union movement has not been able until now to organise an effective counterbalance to the multinational enterprises, because it has stuck too long to the organisational structures dating from the beginning period of the trade union movement of about 80 to 90 years ago.

"Within these structures the International Trade Secretariats have remained relatively weak instruments with few financial funds and limited staff. In addition the ITSs only organise unions operating in one branch (e.g. the chemical industry) while most multinational enterprises have long since passed that sort of frontier and have undertaken a series of activities."

Hatten reveals that his own union plans as an experiment to get all the workers inside one MNC into one union who can then act on behalf of all the workers in sister plants of the same company.

Another possible tactic, still to be employed, would be for shop floor unions to get MNC management to sign a voluntary agreement that they agree to observe ILO conventions 87 and 98 which cover trade union freedoms like the right to organise, to strike and to have collective bargaining powers (see appendix A). The same unions, however, would have to keep in contact with their overseas counterparts to ensure the agreements were maintained, insisting that management provide them with the relevant information to make these exchanges possible.

An additional and pressing need is for labour academics (of which there are many) to begin transferring information to activists so that a broadly based attack on the present structures becomes possible, while at the same time encouraging a linking of workers' movements in different parts of the globe. There might be some hope from the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague now planning a regular newsletter of international labour studies, the first of which appeared in March, 1978.[4]

One example of what could be done by an amalgam of activists and researchers is illustrated by the story of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) in the US and Chile.

In 1976, after paying out very large amounts of official funds as "compensation" for firms like ITT in Chile, OPIC began to lay plans to again insure MNCs in that country. This would have been the basis for massive entry of direct investment into Chile, and the purpose to help solve the junta's financial problems.

This information was discovered by Research Associates International (RAI) in California and they immediately prepared background material and distributed it to hundreds of union offices and to groups affiliated with Chile solidarity work and to church organisations.

Rodney Larson picks up the story. "Although OPIC officially declined to comment on their plans, and privately denied that they were moving in to assist the junta by insuring US direct capital investment in that country, the information from RAI was confirmed by the Washington office on Latin America (WOLA), affiliated with the National Council of Churches. This was done in the usual way of finding sources in the Department of State who leaked the data to WOLA out of resentment over US policies in Chile.

"A national and international campaign was launched to have this decision by OPIC cancelled. The International Metalworkers Federation alerted their five US trade union affiliates to the action and asked for protests in the US Congress. Some, but not all, did respond.

"The World Confederation of Labour in Brussels responded to communications from California and immediately protested to dozens of US members of the House of Representatives and Senate and also through the efforts of their Secretary General of that time, Jean Bruck, alerted all their affiliates in the world to this support of the Santiago junta and asked for protests to US missions in various countries.

"Through the combined action of these and other groups, a very large and effective lobbying campaign was mounted. OPIC, whose record is criticised by many members of the US Congress, responded by dropping their Chilean

insurance cover after a year of complaints in order to forestall greater criticisms and because their legislative charter was up for renewal in 1977 and they faced very strong opposition in various labour and other circles.

"Throughout this period the AFL-CIO remained aloof from the campaign. Despite this, the re-extension of the OPIC insurance in that country was forestalled and at a time when there were plans for very large investments in the country which were either cancelled or indefinitely delayed."

One of the points made by RAI about OPIC's record and plans was that it should be made a legally binding rule that no insurance would be granted to any firm in any country that denied the rights of free association and collective bargaining to workers.

The same principle is now being discussed on a world scale by the WCL and on a European scale by the affiliates of the European Trade Union Confederation which has, in fact, raised the point in formal requests to the EEC. The DGB in West Germany has asked for similar rules in presentations to the Bundestag. The Swedish LO supported similar reforms and succeeded in obtaining the rules in the Swedish insurance scheme for Swedish MNCs.

There is no question that if such legislation was enshrined in the programmes of the eleven nations that have programmes similar to OPIC, it could have an enormous effect in aiding repressed workers and unions. But one problem seems to be the lack of follow-up work in some national federations.

The UK equivalent to OPIC is the government's Export Credit Guarantee Department, currently providing insurance cover of over £59 million to British companies overseas. Significantly one of their staff revealed that "companies seeking insurance are not, with one exception, required to observe a code of conduct regarding employment conditions in the host country in order to obtain cover. The one exception is South Africa where companies seeking insurance must give an undertaking that they will promote the adoption of the policy and practices of the government's "Guidelines for UK companies with Interests in South Africa."

But why only in South Africa? Should taxpayers really have to provide insurance cover for companies not willing to observe basic UN labour conventions regarding treatment of their workers?

It is the case that the Labour Party in 1972 tried and failed to get a set of conditions laid down before insurance cover was given. The Labour Party also says, however, that what they were seeking was not something that would be imposed upon the Export Credit Guarantee Department but rather something instead that would be agreed with the host country. It was "important that any principle or guidelines laid down by the British government are, wherever possible, agreed with the host country concerned" and the "issue of sovereignty is a crucial one." [5]

Is it? What about the sovereignty of Nazi Germany, of the Chilean Junta or the Argentine regime? Isn't it just the point that MNCs are scuttling off to countries where "sovereignty" is maintained with beatings, torture and killings. How can the attachment of conditions be acceptable for one such country—South Africa—and not for others?

What was the TUC doing during the time of these discussions? Through the EEC they appear to have accepted the principle that conditions be attached to insurance cover, yet when I spoke to their economics department they told me they hadn't bothered to do anything about it at home.

One thing is certain. Sooner or later a shop floor union will begin to negotiate on behalf of the firm's Third World workers. And it will spread. It will happen if only because the existing official channels are so constipated that the rank and file will be forced to up and do things for themselves.

In 1973 the 1500 workers at the UK Michelin Plants realised that they were the lowest paid in the various European plants. They demanded, unsuccessfully, that the management meet them to negotiate over this. A one-day strike was called, followed by another. The workers then discovered that lost production was being made up by overtime work in the Italian and French plants. As far as the official trade union bureaucracy was concerned these continental workers didn't exist, they belonged to Communist led federations. Nothing could be done. Then the British convenors took over. They contacted their French and Italian counterparts and on the day of the fourth one-day strike the European workers also downed tools. The management quickly relented. Today convenors at the different plants meet regularly.

Recounting this one of the British convenors said: "We have visited Italy on numerous occasions. It has been an outstanding experience. The relationship we have built up with shop stewards there is just like links with shop stewards in this country. There needs to be an international shop stewards movement of this kind."

This vision is shared by Third World worker and peasant movements who aren't looking for charity but the chance instead of enduring links and exchange of ideas and experience. The Michelin shop stewards who upped and went to Italy point to the time when similar shop floor links will be established with the Third World.

The pioneers would find a disturbing picture of western government funds linked to trade union projects in the Third World and not always appearing to square with the needs of the poor.

But there will be other, more profound, discoveries. It could be the sight of a dying child being bottle fed fizzy orangeade sold by a western company as a health drink, peasant women protecting their menfolk as they walk through lines of armed soldiers to continue the struggle to recover their land, or it could be the voice of Sri Lankan Tissa Balasuraya, from amid the desolation left behind by the British tea companies, asking: "How can we liberate the British workers from this process of exploitation?"

Perhaps then we'll comprehend fully and for the first time that their struggle is our struggle and pause only to ask of our trade union leadership: "Where were you, brother?"

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2. Fuller details of the US government and AFL-CIO plan to set up a western hemispheric rival to the ILO appeared in Latin America political report, November 18, 1977 issue. Also a full page article on the same subject in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, February 1978, written by Rodney Larson.
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5. International Big Business, Labour's policy on the multinationals, the Labour Party, October 1977.

## Appendix A

AIFLD student courses completed, 1962-77. Source "Fifteenth anniversary of Cooperation in Freedom", an AIFLD publication.

## In Country Leadership Training

Since 1962 AIFLD has trained 309,768 workers in educational programmes throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. The length of the courses varies from one week to three months at local, regional and national levels, and a variety of subjects are taught. The following figures show the total number of trainees by country:

i. In Country Students Trained as of December, 1976		
Country	1976 Total	Cumulative Total
Argentina	833	6,147
Bolivia	905	21,192
Brazil	1,285	47,254
Caribbean	1,036	17,522
Chile	6,240	11,176
Colombia	1,199	45,989
Costa Rica	2,809	9,104
Dominican Republic	2,254	20,968
Ecuador		27,954
El Salvador	73	6,932
Guatemala (IESCA)	873	2,049
Guatemala	3,122	7,906
Honduras		20,816
Mexico	1,327	2,039
Nicaragua	674	12,339
Panama	600	11,574
Paraguay		3,815
Peru	303	20,824
Uruguay		10,054
Venezuela		1,733
	23,533	307,386
ii. Labour Economics Graduates as of December, 1976		
Loyola University	15	
Georgetown University	95	
Mount Vernon College	50	
Trinity College	15	
iii. Front Royal Institute Graduates as of December, 1976		
		2,207

Total number of Students trained through 1976

309,768



Housing units compiled in Latin America by AIFLD from 1962-77. Source AIFLD Annual Progress Report, 1977 "Fifteenth anniversary of Cooperation in Freedom"

#### Units Completed

Country	Units	Cost	Financing
Argentina	1,667	US\$ 13,000,000	AID/Private
Argentina	4,560	18,240,000	IDB/Govt. of Argentina
Barbados	3 Models	22,000	AID/AFL-CIO
Brazil	488	1,450,000	AID/PL480 Funds
Colombia	1,400	4,000,000	IDB/Govt. of Colombia
Colombia	706	2,000,000	AID Counterpart Funds
Costa Rica	128	320,000	AID Capital Development Fund
Dominican Republic	110	527,000	AID Grant
Ecuador	14	22,000	AID/AFL-CIO
Guyana	362	1,229,070	AID/AFL-CIO
Honduras	185	398,000	AID Capital Development Fund
Honduras	1,000	3,570,000	IDB/FESITRANH
Mexico	3,104	12,000,000	AID/AFL-CIO
Peru	1,688	7,489,990	AID/ASINCOOP
Peru	1,291	5,000,000	AID/Govt. of Peru
Uruguay	15	45,000	AID
Uruguay	410	2,000,000	AID/Govt. of Uruguay
Venezuela	920	6,000,000	AID/AFL-CIO
	18,048	US\$ 77,313,060	

## Appendix B

The two main International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions regarding worker rights.

### Convention 87

#### Freedom of Association

Article 1. Each member of the ILO for which this Convention is in force undertakes to give effect to the following provisions — Workers and Employers, without distinction whatsoever, shall have the right to establish and, subject only to the rules of the organisation concerned, to join organisations of their own choosing without previous authorisation.

Workers' and employers' organisations shall have the right to draw up their constitution and rules, to elect their representatives in full freedom, to organise their administration and activities and to formulate their programmes.

Workers' and employers' organisations shall not be liable to be dissolved or suspended by the administrative authority.

Workers' and employers' organisations shall have the right to establish and join federations and confederations and any such organisation, federation or confederation shall have the right to affiliate with organisations of workers and employers.

### Convention 98

Workers shall enjoy adequate protection against acts of anti-union discrimination in respect of their employment. Such protection shall apply more particularly in respect of acts calculated to — make the employment of a worker subject to the condition that he shall not join a union or shall relinquish trade union membership.

In particular, acts which are designed to promote the establishment of workers' organisations under the domination of employers or employers' organisations, or to support workers' organisations by financial or other means, with the object of placing such organisations under the control of employers or employers' organisations, shall be deemed to constitute acts of interference within the meaning of this Article.

Machinery appropriate to national conditions shall be established, where necessary, for the purpose of ensuring respect for the right to organise as defined in the preceding articles.

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